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THE VEDANTA KESARI

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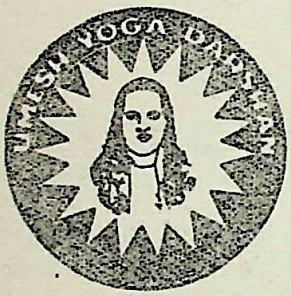

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FEBRUARY, 1967

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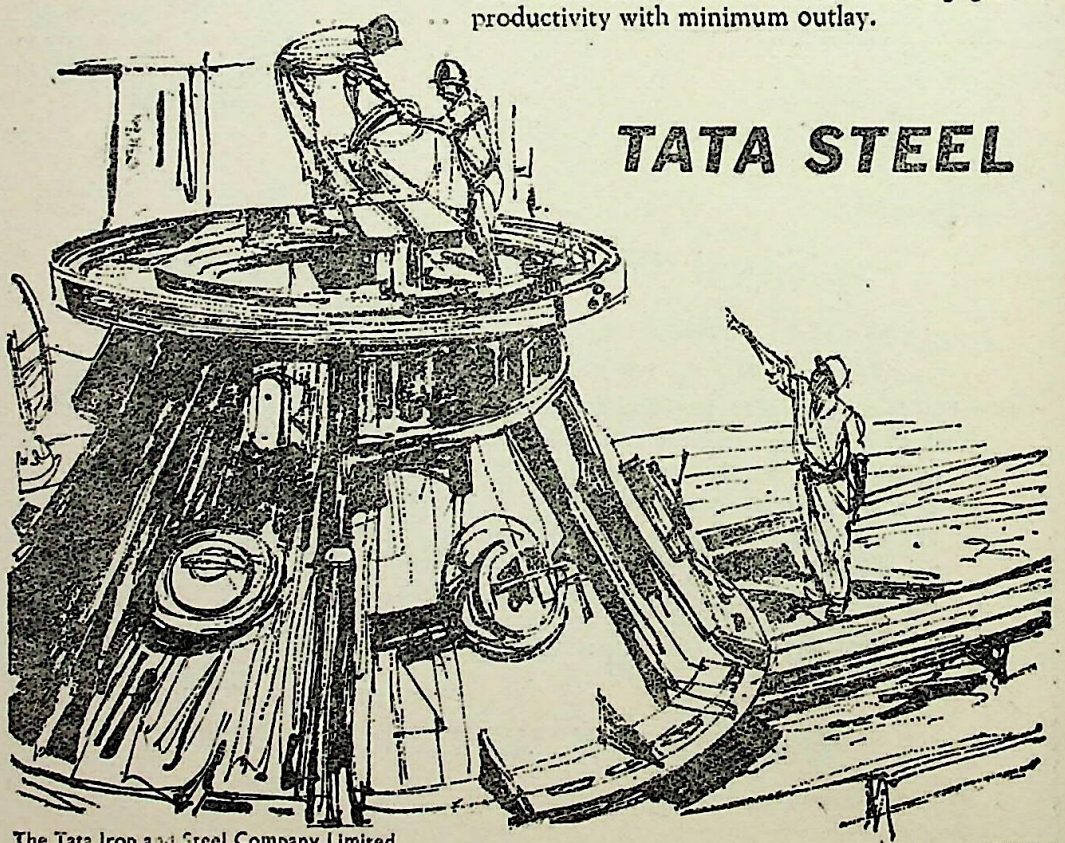

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.... Be bold and face
The Truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease.
Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams,
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.
SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

THE VEDANTA KESARI

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PARAMĀRTHASĀRA

सर्वाकारो भगवानुपास्यते येन येन भावेन। तं तं भावं भूत्वा चिन्तामणिवत्समभ्येति ॥ ६६ ॥

66. The Lord, who has all forms,[1] in whatever form He is worshipped takes over that particular form and approaches (the devotee), like the *cintāmaṇi*.[2]

[1] God has all forms since He is the self of all. (Refer also *Gita* 4.11)
[2] A gem which is said to bestow on the possessor whatever he desires.

नारायणमात्मानं ज्ञात्वा सर्गस्थितिप्रलयहेतुम्। सर्वज्ञः सर्वगतः सर्वः सर्वेश्वरो भवति ॥ ६७ ॥

67. Having known one's own Self as Nārāyaṇa,[1] the cause of creation, preservation and destruction of the universe, one[2] becomes the omniscient and omnipresent Lord of all.[3]

[1] Devotedly, uninterruptedly and for a long time meditating on one's Self as Nārāyaṇa one realizes Him.
[2] *One* anyone without any distinction of *varṇa* or *āshrama* of life, provided he is devoted to God and the preceptor.
[3] He realizes Nārāyaṇa as his Self.

NOTE: What is the utility of such realization? That is being stated in the next verse.

आत्मज्ञस्तरति शुचं यस्माद्विद्वान् बिभेति न कुतश्चित्। मृत्योरपि मरणभयं न
भवत्यन्यत् कुतस्तस्य ॥ ६८ ॥

68. One who knows the Self goes across sorrow,[1] for a wise person does not fear anything.[2] He has no fear even of death, being himself of the nature of death.[3] What then to speak of other fears!

[1] See *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 7.1.3.
[2] One who sees one's Self as the Lord, Brahman, has no fear. (See also *Taittirīya* 2.9.)
[3] Having realized the oneness with the Lord he becomes the Lord of death as well, so he has no fear of death.

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क्षयवृद्धिवध्यघातकबन्धनमोक्षैर्विवर्जितं नित्यम् । परमार्थतत्त्वमेतद् यदतोऽन्यत्
तदनृतं सर्वम् ॥ ६९ ॥

69. This highest reality is ever devoid of decay or growth, of being killed or of killing, of bondage or liberation. All others separated from it are unreal.[1]

[1] Whatever is subject to change is Prakṛti, the only reality is Puruṣa.

एवं प्रकृतिं पुरुषं विज्ञाय निरस्तकल्पनाजालः । आत्मारामः प्रशमं समास्थितः
केवली भवति ॥ ७० ॥

70. Having known Prakṛti and Puruṣa in this wise,[1] being freed from the labyrinth of imagination,[2] having joy in one's own Self,[3] and having attained quiescence one becomes liberated.[4]

[1] As narrated in the previous verse.
[2] By giving up the idea of duality.
[3] Having for his experience the unbroken bliss of the Ātman by realizing It.
[4] He attains Kaivalya. (See Mundaka 3.2.8)

DOUBT : Are the body, sense organs, *prāṇa* and intellect, of a person who has attained liberation, destroyed immediately or do they remain for some more time ?

To this the following verse replies supporting the latter view :

नलकदलिवेणुबाणा नश्यन्ति यथा स्वपुष्पमासाद्य । तद्वत् स्वभावभूताः स्वभावतां
प्राप्य नश्यन्ति ॥ ७१ ॥

71. Just as the *Nala* (a species of reed) the plantain tree,[1] the bamboo, and the *Bāṇa* (another species of reed) perish having put forth flowers,[2] likewise the effects of Nature (Prakṛti)[3] perish having attained their purpose.[4]

[1] Sanskrit word '*Kadalī*' should have an elogated 'ī' but is used here in its shorter form for the sake of metre.
[2] As long as their purpose is not served they do not perish ; that is the meaning.
[3] The body etc., which have been produced from Prakṛti.
[4] The body etc., are not immediately destroyed but persist for some time, producing their effects of pain, pleasure and delusion because of the Prārabdha Karma, and then perish.

Three Śruti passages which the commentator cites in this connection to support this idea are : आप्तकामो आत्मकामो न तस्य प्राणा उत्क्रामन्ति । (*Br. Up.* 4.4.6) 'To him whose objects of desire have been attained and to whom all objects of desire are but the self, his organs do not depart.' * This passage pronounces the verdict that a man of realization has got to go nowhere even after the fall of the body, i.e., there is no transmigration for him. Even while living in the body he has attained Brahmanhood. तद्यथाहिनिर्ल्वयनी वल्मीके मृता प्रत्यस्ता शयीतैवमेवेदं शरीरं शेते (*Br. Up.* 4.4.7).

(*Continued on page* 452)

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON THE REGENERATION OF INDIA

I

GREAT sages have an unlimited view of what is to come and how best it can be achieved. Nay, they give a new turn to events that are to happen, strike a new path, smoothening the rugged terra and avoiding the abysmal hollows that might have been carved on the beaten track by vested interests. The natural human tendency is to go easy, take everything easy and reap as maximum a benefit as the circumstances allow. That is why in every age sages and Incarnations have to appear and give redress to and reform mankind. Sri Krishna says about Karma Yoga, 'This Yoga, handed down through generations, was known to the Rajarshis, but due to the long passage of time has been lost here (in this world).'[1] This happens in regard to every ideal. The zeal for the ideal lessens due to several reasons : (1) when the ideal is taken-over by ill-equipped aspirants, (2) when it becomes only a cover for exploitation, (3) when the aspirants break off from the enthusiasm and spirit with which they start, and when there creeps in laxity of purpose. The first two need not be discussed here. But the last one, the laxity in purpose, we have to admit is the outcome of a lack of conviction regarding the ideal. Sri Ramakrishna convincingly proves this by an illustration. 'Suppose there is a store of gold in a room and only a thin partition separates it from a thief. Will the thief remain idle? Will he not feel restless to get it?' We relax because we are more after our comforts than intent on our purpose. We become privilege minded. And that in turn makes us stoop to means fair or foul to secure those privileges. Thus runs the down-grade path until we know not how far we have gone. So in this hunt for privileges people carve out hollows in the declared path and mislead others into them. Then comes the necessity for an Incarnation or a great sage to retrieve humanity.

Swami Vivekananda came, gave his message and left his mortal coil as well. It is some decades now. But his message was not for the hour, nor only for India but to the humanity as a whole.

What was his message to India, for her regeneration? There were many reform societies in his time, each with a limited view trying to cater to some decadent branch of the tree of the Indian social fabric. But Swami Vivekananda was not in a hurry to do anything spectacular for the time being. He studied the situation; he studied the disease; he investigated the symptoms. He travelled far and wide. He allowed his mind to absorb all that he saw, as also to crystallize ideas by themselves. From his observation and study of the history of nations he came to one conclusion, that 'each nation has its own part to play, and naturally, each nation has its own peculiarity and individuality, with which it is born. Each represents, as it were, one peculiar note in this harmony of nations, and this is its very life, its vitality. In it is the backbone, the foundation, and the bed-rock of the national life.... Here in this blessed land, the foundation, the backbone, the life-centre is religion and religion alone. In India, religious life forms the centre, the keynote of the whole music of national life'. Such was his diagnosis and naturally approriate was his treatment. He said, 'So, in India, social reform has to be preached by showing how much more spiritual a life the new system will bring; and

[1] एवं परंपरा प्राप्तं इमं राजर्षयो विदुः ।
स: कालेनेह महता योगो नष्टः परंतप ।
Bhagavad Gita IV.2.

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politics has to be preached by showing how much it will improve the one thing that the nation wants — its spirituality.'

It is not a dogma of a religious fanatic that Swamiji puts forth here. Because we are experiencing the effects of the neglect of this sane advice everyday. Our social reform done with a vengeance, as it were, is only sowing seeds of hatred, of narrowness in outlook, of embitterments, and the consequences follow with unimpeded force, bewildering thinking men and women as to where all this will end. You may ask : What about those people in other nations who have not accepted spirituality as their basis ? We are only trying to imitate them. If they can survive why can we not ? Well, it requires a prophet to make a right choice of life. And as Swami Vivekananda says, 'We made our choice ages ago and we must abide by it. And, after all, it is not such a bad choice.' Spirituality has penetrated into the very nerves and sinews of our being. It has become our very nature. If you try to change the nature of a material by any means it would not remain the same material again. It will be something else. And the new matter that is produced will not serve the purpose for which the old material was meant. Similarly you cannot change your nature and survive as a nation.

Swamiji emphatically declares, 'For good or for evil, our vitality is concentrated in our religion. You cannot change it. You cannot destroy it and put in its place another.... You can only work under the law of least resistance, and this religious line is the line of least resistance in India. This is the line of life, this is the line of growth, and this is the line of well-being in India—to follow the track of religion.'

Other nations are made out quite differently. The material, the equipment and the tradition that made them also are different and even they, as days pass we see, are searching to find out on what better principles, on what better basis the solidarity of their race could be built up. Materialism has lost its charm and people are groping for something substantial, something ever-lasting ; the appeal of humanitarianism alone is also not satisfying, for it breaks down when it comes in conflict with selfish interest. Should we then throw away our heritage and take up the things that are being discarded even by others as unsubstantial ? We must be wary before we commit ourselves. This is an age of speed, yielding rapid revolutionary harvests in every sphere. If we are not cautious we may leave to posterity a legacy which it will find difficult to live by or throw off for centuries to come.

Besides, we have to take heed of the warning given by Swami Vivekananda. 'If any nation attempts to throw off its national vitality, the direction which has become its own through the transmission of centuries, that nation dies, if it succeeds in the attempt.'

Swami Vivekananda did not stop with placing this idea before us, but he worked for its implementation, to revive the drooping religious fervour in the country. For as he said, 'Religion and religion alone is the life of India, and when that goes India will die, in spite of politics, in spite of social reforms, in spite of Kubera's wealth poured upon the head of everyone of her children'.

Swami Vivekananda, we must remember, was not against material prosperity. On the other hand, we know that the main purpose of his going to the West was to search means to ameliorate the condition of the masses. And after his return from the West he stressed that India should learn science from the West to increase the wealth of the nation and improve the condition of the man at large. But this did not make him ignore the vital question. At the time he advocated the cultivation of scientific knowledge he also gave the warning that has been referred to above, the gist of which is that we must not lose our spiritual moorings, in our pursuit of material prosperity.

II

What did Swami Vivekananda mean by religion or spirituality ? If we go through his works we shall find that to him religion did

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not constitute in merely some external observances, or dogmas or creeds. It was a way of life, a transformation of the inner man. "Religion," he said, "is realization," realization of God, of our inner Being, of Brahman or by whatever name you may call it.

According to this definition we have to live the life in such a way that in the end it will lead us to that ultimate Reality. And this is not the work of the anchorite alone. If it were so it will be the religion of a few thousands only. But India is much more than that. Man in every stage of his life should uncover such an attitude, breathe out such an atmosphere. It is all a preparation. It is like ploughing the land and making it ready to receive the seed in the proper season. Unless we are trained early in life to discipline our minds and tune it to a higher purpose, it is not possible to change overnight into a saint, a sage. And unless one has become a sage he has not reached religion according to the above definition of Swami Vivekananda.

You may wonder, why such a pessimistic attitude is put forth. If we have to be true to our concept of religion we cannot but state what are facts. What then about all that take place in the name of religion, i.e., all rituals, and other practices? Let us give a parallel illustration. According to a definition given by Śri Śaṅkara the word *Upaniṣad* means knowledge that destroys the cause of worldly existence viz., ignorance, and leads to liberation, loosening all bonds of this world. But traditionally and conventionally when we utter the word *upaniṣad* some book is meant. Śaṅkara explains that though a book as such cannot free us from ignorance, but because the book contains the knowledge which when realized sets us free, it can justifiably be termed *upaniṣad*. He then cites an ancient saying of such usage: 'Clarified butter is indeed life'.[2] Similarly all that leads to realization is also called religion.

Another objection that may be raised here is: why should we devote our whole life to it? Have there been no cases of sudden transformation? Well, it is not a rule but an exception. And all of us cannot be exceptions, for in that case it will not be an exception but a rule. And we do not see any such rule prevalent in this world. If it were so we would all, the moment we get disgusted with this world, be transformed into higher beings. And no one can say that he had not at some time or other, experienced a distaste for life, however momentary it might have been. These fleeting moments are of course good but unless their frequency increases and till they leave a permanent impress on the mind they will be useless for the present life of that person. That is why it was said by the wise men of the olden times that one should be 'Religious while yet young'.[3]

Why did India pitch upon this choice viz., spirituality as its basis? There is a significant verse in the *Bhagavad Gita* which brings this to the fore. 'What purpose is served by the wells and tanks, is served in a much better way by the flood, (an extensive reservoir), likewise all the results of actions and sacrifices prescribed in the Veda come to a *brāhmaṇa* who has attained knowledge (of Brahman).'[4] India did not make this choice therefore inadvertently or by any mischance. Its sages deliberated over all that went before it, as also all that went against it and then firmly held on to the religious ideal. They had no doubt, whatsoever, that this would be for India's good, nay for the good of the world too.

How do we justify that everything is included in this ideal? What about ethics? Well, it is foolish to think of living the life of the spirit without a moral foundation. One who has not abstained from wicked deeds can never

[2] See Sri Sankara's Introduction to the commentary on Kathopanisad. आयुर्वै घृतम्।

[3] युवैव धर्मशीलः स्यात्।

[4] यावानर्थ उदपाने सर्वतः संप्लुतोदके।
तावान्सर्वेषु वेदेषु ब्राह्मणस्य विजानतः॥
Bhagavad Gita II.46.

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even dream of leading a holy life. If any man poses as holy and yet be immoral, he only tries to deceive others, as also himself.

Some Western scholars have imputed that there has been no stress on ethics in the Hindu scriptures. To this we might answer that ethics was not the goal, the be-all and end-all of the Hindu life. It was only a means. Besides, in ancient India religion was taught through personal contact and what was necessary to be taught was the highest value, the other side, the moral side, being communicated by example. It is a pity that these scholars do not go deeper down into the subject and take cognizance of the lives lived according to the injunctions of the scriptures. For then the ethical rigour involved therein will be obvious even for a superficial observer if he cares to note the good points in the Hindu system. Perhaps, their approach, far from being sympathetic, has been antagonistic, with a view to find out some way of showing Hinduism at a disadvantage, with some ulterior motive. Otherwise, a single verse of the *Muṇḍakopaniṣad* is enough to silence these critics. "To him, who had approached in the proper manner, whose mind had attained quiescence, who has controlled his sense organs, the wise one (the preceptor), should teach that knowledge of Brahman by which he could know the immutable reality termed Puruṣa, in His true perspective.'[5] What greater morality or ethical eminence can we expect anywhere? And what severe code of conduct one has had to pass through to attain quietness of the mind, which includes the wiping out of the ego, can best be known through experience. To those who want to criticize Hinduism about the so-called ethical lacunae we would ask to cultivate this one virtue, which Hinduism insists on the aspirants to liberation to follow, and then come out with their experience frankly. Many, we are sure, will fail miserably. The very fact that they are out to slander others shows their 'holier than thou' attitude which is the corner stone of the edifice of egotism and not spirituality or religion.

So, in spiritual attainment is also included the perfection of morality and heights of humanism. A spiritual man does not become like a stock or a stone but feels for the entire humanity. He feels not only for those who are his kith and kin, not only for those of the same caste, of the same faith, but for all, without distinction; nay his sympathy reaches beings which in our ordinary mortal eyes are in the lower order in the animal kingdom. Such an attitude alone can save India from degenerating and not factions and fights over paltry things. And this attitude cannot be developed until the unity of our being is stressed, practised and realized in life. At least an intellectual basis must first be laid for this purpose, the masses should be educated towards this end. By feeding them with the poison of hatred and jealousy we are only ruining the chances of a recovery that is most essential at the present time, if we have to consolidate the freedom that has been gained and be of use in the comity of nations.

It may be asked: Spirituality is a personal affair; why should it be linked with the regeneration of a country? To this we would put the counter question: What do you mean by the country? Is it the geographical state or the persons inhabiting it? The geographical state is inert. It does not do any violence to the rules of Nature and therefore needs no correction. If you say that you are concerned with the people of the country, with persons, is it unreasonable to say that men and women of the land should have a higher motive and live up to it for the upliftment of their status? Swami Vivekananda points out, 'The basis of all systems social or political, rests upon the goodness of men. No nation is great or good

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[5] तस्मै स विद्वानुपसन्नाय सम्यक्प्रशान्तचित्ताय
शमान्विताय।
येनाक्षरं पुरुषं वेद सत्यं प्रोवाच तां तत्त्वतो
ब्रह्मविद्याम्॥
Mundaka Up. I.ii.13.

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because Parliament enacts this or that, but because its men are great and good. Men are more valuable than all the wealth of the world'. He continues, 'When you have men who are ready to sacrifice their everything for the sake of their country, sincere to the backbone — when such men arise, India will become great in every respect. Then only will India awake when hundreds of large-hearted men and women giving up all desires of enjoying the luxuries of life, will long and exert themselves to their utmost, for the well-being of the millions of their countrymen'. How is this possible unless we feel our affinity, oneness with the masses? How can we feel oneness with them until we know that they are the same Lord manifesting in various forms? In short, except through religion? That is why Swamiji said that all our reforms should have religion as their basis. That is the only firm ground where it is not possible to stumble.

Further, he emphasised the necessity of unity. 'The first plank in the making of a future India, the first step that is to be hewn out of that rock of ages, is the unification of religion. All of us have to be taught that we Hindus have certain common ideas behind us, and that time has come when for the well-being of ourselves, for the well-being of our race, we must give up all little quarrels and differences. National union in India must be a gathering up of its scattered spiritual forces. A nation in India must be a union of those whose hearts beat to the same spiritual tune.'

If we are earnest in the well-being of our country we should rise above our petty selfishnesses, and think of the nation. Everyone of us has to do it. There is nothing that cannot be achieved when we become united. Even the scarcity of food that we feel now will be borne cheerfully once we unite and try to share and share equally all that we have with one and all. How is it possible unless we overcome our selfishnesses? Let us start to put this idea of Vedanta, of seeing God in everyone, in the practical field. Then everything will go on smoothly. All the rubs and frictions and clashes are due to the projection of our selfish interests. Regeneration of India is not possible unless this idea of Vedanta is practised in the day-to-day life.

III

Swami Vivekananda's other suggestions regarding the regeneration of India were education, uplift of women, reformation of the social fabric keeping in view the cultural background and religious basis, and uplift of the masses. Each one of these are to be deeply pondered over and made part of our life if we mean to revive India to her past glory and make it a useful member of this world.

A PRAYER FOR UNITY

Thou, mighty Agni, gatherest up all that is precious
Bring us all treasures as thou art enkindled in libations' place.
Assemble, speak together: Let your minds be all of one accord,
As the ancient gods unanimous sit down to their appointed share.
The place is common, common the assembly, common the mind, so be their thought united.
A common purpose do I lay before you, and worship with your general oblation
One and the same be your resolve, and be your minds of one accord.
United be the thoughts of all that all may happily agree.

— Rig Veda X.191. From the *Brahmavadin* for August 1907.

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GOD AND CREATION: INDIAN AND WESTERN PERSPECTIVES

SWAMI NITYABODHANANDA

To talk of eternal creation, according to some, is to injure and even to destroy the eternity of God. If creation or universe is eternal, then no God is needed to create it or to absorb it and then again to create it. All dualistic religions try to awaken faith in man by speaking of a God who creates the world and dissolves it at His will. For these religions God is eternal and Creation, or universe, is not eternal. So then to talk or even to suggest the eternality or limitlessness of the universe was considered blasphemy in the middle ages and those astronomers like Copernicus or Galileo who implied infinity of the universe by their hypotheses were either tried or imprisoned as traitors to God. We are more tolerant and balanced now-a-days. When scientists like Eddington or Jeans say that there is a universal mind behind creation or when they speak of a mathematical God behind the world, thus injuring God's holiness, we are not outraged or upset as we were in the Middle Ages. Why? Our philosophy of Nature has become much more neutral and we too have become much more neutral. Amongst the many things that have contributed to create this neutrality in us we must mention two events, the replacement of the space-spirit hierarchy[1] by the space-time continuum and the electronic brain.

The space-time continuum need not necessarily push out God and make man a grotesque imposter of God. As it is today, it does, after having destroyed all intimacy between man and God. Intimacy demands love and respect. Even taking for granted that God is our neighbour in space, arrogance and disrespect cannot promote intimacy. The scientist who was responsible for the rocket that landed on the moon said the day following: 'We have conquered space, we are masters of space'. Man, no doubt, is the master of space — not because he landed the rocket in the moon, but because he is at the top of the space-spirit hierarchy, because he, in essence, is spirit. In Vedanta, space is a form of the spirit and spirit is a condensation of space, and the Vedantic God has a legitimate place in this hierarchy without losing any bit of his status. If the space-time continuum cannot fit in into this very tolerant and accommodating hierarchy, it is because the space-time continuum is an effort to explain the universe only in terms of matter.

Infinite space need not push God out of the picture. To conceive of infinite space shows our capacity to conceive of infinity and a mind that conceives infinite space can conceive of an infinite God too. But dualistic religions are afraid of an infinite God and naturally of infinite space. In so far as conception involves perception,[2] to conceive of infinite space is to give reality to an infinite God at the same time. Both have being. When we say perception is inseparable from the object, which in simple language means we *live* everything we perceive, we integrate with the object we perceive — we touch being. And Being is big and vast enough to accommodate infinite God and infinite space.

Modern science has made an abstraction of being and wants to go beyond it. Whenever knowledge goes ahead of being, it defeats itself and is apt to be misused. Knowledge

[1] God created the world and space, hence He is on the top of the space-spirit hierarchy.

[2] The person who conceives and the one who perceives are not two, but one.

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must lead us to being, and must get itself absorbed in being. Knowledge is a vanishing act. But, instead, if knowledge feels that it is everything, that it should not give place to being, to realization, that it is sovereign, then naturally it must make an abstraction, or an oversimplification of Being. That is what it does today. Knowledge is so overconfident that it has accepted the formula of 'Nothing but . . .'. If somebody asks what is God, we answer: 'It is nothing but a device . . .' — 'What is the theory of relativity?' — 'It is nothing but . . .'. Life cannot be summed up by slogans like 'nothing but'. Being is a profound mystery — mystery in the spiritual sense — it is the *mysterium tremendum* and it can never be packed up in 'nothing but' packets.

Now coming back to the question with which we started, the question of creation and its eternality, this theme and the various variations it is capable of, occupied the attention of all thinkers, since the dawn of thought, whether men of science or religion. To start with, our earth was the centre and the sun was going round; and then the sun was stationary and the earth going round the sun, and revolving round its own axis. The sun was the same all the time, giving his heat and light to the world. But reversals in man's thought mean reversals in man's confidence over nature and his attitude to it. Before we study the Indian view-point, it is interesting to go into the Western views beginning with the Greeks.

To begin with, for Anaximander, the Ionian philosopher of the 7th century B.C., the universe was no longer a closed box (which means his forebears considered it so) but infinite in extension and duration. The earth is a cylindrical column, surrounded by air; it floats upright in the centre of the universe without support and yet it does not fall because, being in the centre it has no preferred direction towards which to lean. The sun is merely a hole in the rim of a huge wheel and the stars are pin-holes in a dark-fabric.

In the Pythagorean universe (Pythagoras 500 B.C.) the earth disc of Anaximander changes into a spherical ball. It no longer floats in water, but stands in the centre. Around it, the sun, moon and planets revolve in concentric circles. The swift revolution of bodies causes a swish, a musical hum in the air which he calls 'the music of the spheres'. Only the master can hear this music and not others.

Aristotle was the first to bring in God into astronomy and say that God rules the world from outside. For him too the earth was the centre of the universe, surrounded by nine concentric circles, transparent spheres. The innermost is the sphere of the moon and the two outermost are the sphere of the fixed stars and beyond that, the sphere of the Prime Mover, who keeps the whole machinery turning: God. Naturally, Aristotle was not an astronomer, but a philosopher and that is why in his hand astronomy becomes cosmology as he introduces an abstract theological God into his system. In a sense all the thinkers cited just now were philosophers and not astronomers.

Next we come to the three well-known astronomers: Copernicus, Kepler and Galileo. Copernicus came at a time when the acknowledged view of the universe — which was essentially the view of the Church — was very rigid and limited. The extension in time of the mediaeval Christian universe was limited to the relatively short span between the creation of the world which lay some five thousand years back and the second coming of Christ, which lay ahead. In space the world was bound by the ninth sphere, beyond which lay the heavenly Empyrean. And then, thirdly, there was a final truth regarding every subject, knowledge, technology and science, as finite and bounded as the universe itself.

Into this bounded and rigid universe came Copernicus with his revolutionary ideas. Copernicus in formulating his famous theory that the sun is in the centre (which later on came to be known as the heliocentric theory)

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implied the limitlessness and infinity of space which was too much for his generation to digest. The clerical attitude of ironical indifference towards this new system is reflected in a contemporary pro-clerical author writing that a place is reserved for Copernicus by the side of Lucifer's throne, his other companions being Machiavelli and Paracelsus! The heliocentric idea of the universe was restated in modern form by Kepler and again reinforced by Galileo. It altered the climate of thought not by what it expressly stated, but by what it implied. They were all destructive to the solid edifice of mediaeval philosophy and undermined the foundations on which it rested.

Galileo, as is well-known, had long difficulties and controversies with the Church. One can very well understand the inquietude of the Church in seeing this kind of free thought undermining the *status-quo*. One can understand a high Church dignitary suggesting to Galileo very sympathetically how he can get round the difficulty. He told Galileo that the latter can argue for the Copernican system without asserting it to be true. 'Assuming that a hypothesis explains satisfactorily certain phenomena,' said the dignitary, 'does not necessarily mean that it is true, for God is all-powerful and may have produced the said phenomena by some entirely different means which are not understood by the human mind.'

These three astronomers were pure astronomers and did not have recourse to God to explain certain inexplicables in their system.[3] God ceases to be God when we use Him to explain an inexplicable point in a system. Much later, another scientist who built on the discoveries of these astronomers, but who brought in a new idea, the idea of gravitation or action at a distance, had to imply God to get over the difficulties of his own concept. I mean Newton. Newton's notion of a 'force' which acts instantly at a distance without an intermediary agent, which traverses the vastest distances in zero seconds and pulls at immense stellar objects is an idea so mystical that it relapses into the picture of the animistic universe of the ancients with a presiding God who wound the clock of universe from time to time.

In Einstein we find the great desire of the modern man to explain everything, even infinite space and time in terms of matter and the result is the birth of space-time continuum. The space-time continuum seems to have superhuman powers of creation and directive intelligence. In Eddington and Jeans who speak of a mathematician-God or universal mind in which the creation is first conceived, we feel the anguish of the human spirit to free itself from its self-created materialistic outfit and escape into thinner and spiritual air.

When God is thought of as creator of the universe or as part of a system either astronomical or theological, He loses His being and glory. In theology that is supreme and which dominates over philosophy with all the glory we can add to His stature, God is part of a system and hence loses His being. God as Reason, God as the causeless cause, God as the most Beautiful, and then God as the Truth of truths, this is the God whom the Vedanta worships. In none of these aspects God is a part of a system; He is supreme. As part of a system, God cannot be the witness of the harmony of faiths. On the contrary in a theology that is subservient to philosophy, God has His Being and because He keeps His Being He becomes the Absolute of philosophy. Such a God is always the witness of the harmony of religions. To such a God who in essence is Absolute, theologies and religions are but ways of looking at Him, fingers pointing to Him. Only such a God can

[3] All the same they were God-believing souls and one is struck by the way in which Kepler explains his systems by using Christian terminology, by the Christian Trinity. For him the visible universe is the symbol of the Holy Trinity: the Sun represents the Father, the sphere of the fixed stars the Son, the invisible forces emanating from the Father and acting through interstellar space represent the Holy Ghost.

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give us the strength and certitude that our souls are searching for.

A creator God suffers from an eclipse of His being because as creator He must take responsibility for the anomalies and sufferings of this world. We continue to subject God to suffering, in other words, envisage a suffering God as the centre of our religion so long as we think of God as the cause and universe as the effect, so long as we view them in a cause-and-effect relation. But in reality, God and the universe are inseparable ; they are not separated by space and time and so to consider the universe as an effect is to deprive it of all spirituality, all the transparence it gets by its juxtaposition with God. Not that the God who is our ideal is shy of shouldering world's responsibility. Not that He is anxious to preserve His perfection intact and is unconcerned about the world's imperfection. Only a God who is above the cause and effect relationship can preserve His own perfection and impart His perfection or being to creation which is juxtaposed with Him. We are anxious to preserve the integrity of God's being and at the same time keep the world's eternality intact. This is what Vedanta does. In Vedanta creation is eternal. This does not injure the eternity of God ; for in Vedanta creation is a smile of God. God smiled and the creation came into being. Or God saw (thought) and creation came into being. He is the awakener of creation. (Ref. *Chāndogya Up.*, VI. 2-3.)

A few conclusions come upon us from the above analysis :

(1) That God and his creation are inseparable moments of thought, so inseparable that when one thinks of the one the other comes up automatically.

(2) That so long as we separate them, we shall give only partial reality and validity to each.

(3) That efforts to separate them will end up in depriving man of all his spirituality.

(4) That the fear and defiance of a theory that attributes eternality to creation comes from the incapacity to conceive or realize eternality for oneself.

God does not create ; His presence brings the world into being.[4] He is just like a catalyser. Creation is God's potency in manifestation, not Being in manifestation. Things have their being and their potency. The potency of things may or may not be expressed, but they are eternal even as their being is eternal. God's potency is this universe and as God is eternal His potency also is eternal and so creation is eternal. But God's potency offers no idea of, no clue to His Being. As a matter of fact nothing can give us an inkling or clue into God's Being. For, all things *have* being. God does not *have* being. He is His own Being. So long as we have not grown into His Being, it seems a mockery when we hear it said that God smiled and the creation was. We ask how can creation with all its wickedness and anomalies be the smile of God ? When we have grown into His Being as the realized saints and sages are, then we will understand that the world is an overflow of God's abundance and divine purpose and not before. We can understand the world and explain it only by linking it to God's Being ; we can never understand God's being in and through the world, the world being only His potency and not being.

God's grace is eternal and the most eloquent testimony of this grace is the world. The world is the eternal proof of God's eternal grace. The grace of God is inseparable from God and the world is inseparable from God ; it clings to Him even as a child clings to the Mother. God imparts His transparence and spirituality to the world and the world is what it is because of this transparence. Even to say that when we see the world we do not see God, and when we see God we do not see the world — which is a psychological

[4] 'By Me presiding, Prakṛti, My potency, produces the moving and the unmoving ; because of this, the world revolves.'—*Gita*, IX. 10. Here 'presiding' means as a mere viewer on every side, as the immutable witness.

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truth — is only a concession to our weakness. We presuppose a duality.

In order that we may not confound God's being with world's existence the great seers of Vedanta have recorded it from the depths of their spiritual experience the graded scale in which they saw God and the world. First is the Absolute, indeterminate, undifferentiated, etc. . . . Then is God the Creator (Īśwara) — third is the world-soul or the collectivity of individual souls, subtle stage, and fourth the world or creation. It is the same reality viewed in varying stages of man's evolving consciousness.

The creation is eternal, because God is eternal and his potency also must be eternal. The verse of the *Gītā*, ch. XIII, v. 19, on which we are commenting says : 'Matter and spirit[5] are without beginning and hence eternal. Know that forms and qualities are born of Prakṛti (matter)'.

Śaṅkara commenting on this verse says that 'Prakṛti and Puruṣa, matter and spirit are the Prakṛtis or manifestations of Īśwara, God-creator. As Īśwara is the eternal Lord it is but right that His nature also should be eternal. The Lordship of Īśwara consists indeed in His possession of the two Prakṛtis by which He causes the origin, preservation and dissolution of the universe'.

So then if matter and spirit are the potencies of another supreme God we have to search for him deeper than the domain where our intellect (reason) and minds are valid, for we have seen that even our reason belongs to matter, but appears to be spirit by the reflection in it of the light lent by the spirit. About this supreme God or Person the *Gītā* speaks a little later in the 15th ch., v. 17-18 : 'Distinct from the perishable and the imperishable (perishable comprises all creatures and the imperishable is the changeless and eternal) is this supreme Person (Puruṣottama). He penetrates and sustains all the worlds'.

Integration with this higher order of reality, the Supreme Person is obstructed by the forms of Prakṛti[6] that manifest in us as reason, mind or mental and intellectual dispositions. These are in fact the forms that result from the conjunctions of Prakṛti and Puruṣa. In other words, it is our own mind that stands as an obstacle to realization. The *Gītā* by saying that Prakṛti and Puruṣa, or matter and spirit, are beginningless or eternal, is not making a simple ontological statement, but formulating a method of discipline to go beyond mind.

Suppose somebody says that the mind is beginningless, our tendency will be to find out the character of that beginningless experience. We will try to push our mind to its beginning ; but always a thought remains, either the thought that the mind has a beginning, or that it is beginningless. Unless we reject that thought and all thought, we cannot really know where the mind begins. In other words, we must stop thinking, we must stop making concepts, for our mind is the obstacle to Being. This does not mean that we should become like the wall or we become wooden. It means that we use some other faculty of ours other than thought. We call it the awareness of our Being, awareness of existence.

The Vedanta, both the non-dualistic and dualistic schools, affirm that knowledge is not an attribute of the Self or Ātman, but is a transformation of the inner mind (*antaḥ-kāraṇa*).[7] The Self is of the nature of pure consciousness and through knowledge we cannot realize the Self. We cannot know the Self. Not that, as in Kant, the Self in Vedanta is unknown and unknowable, but that it is

[5] By this we can understand that the word 'spirit' we are using everyday is a relative term. At least for Vedanta, it is a relative term and must be distinguished from the Supreme Spirit.

[6] Prakṛti is that out of which all forms and qualities (*guṇas*) come into existence.

[7] *Antaḥ-kāraṇa* or internal organ consists of four divisions : Manas, the discursive mind — Buddhi, the determinative faculty — Ahamkara, the ego principle — Chitta, the principle that organises experience into a whole.

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more than the known and other than the unknown. When this realization comes we no longer think, we become. Thought gives place to being. This is what I meant by saying that we must stop thinking. Known and unknown are concepts that surge in our minds when we do not realize the Self as our very essence, as our Being ; in the same way as love and respect are concepts that come up in our minds when we do not live them. When we realize Reality as our very self, we cannot say by which route we came to, whether we came by the route of knowledge or devotion. For the path of knowledge is like the passage of birds in the sky : they leave no foot prints. Routes to Reality are imagined when Reality is taken as far away from us and not our essence.

We said knowledge is a transformation of our inner mind ; realization of the Self dawns when these transforming tendencies stop and the mind melts into the Self and gets established in the being and glory of the Self. In Vedantic psychology, the mind takes the form of the object it knows. That is why Vedanta says that the world or creation is a mind-construct. It is true that the world is there, but without the mind going out and taking the form of the world, we cannot have the certitude that it is there before us and around us. The capacity of the mind to take the form of the world it knows, the mind owes to the Self. For there are moments when the Self does not lend its energies to be exteriorised, when it is completely interiorised. God did not go out of Himself to create this world. He was there and the world came into being. In deep meditation and in deep sleep the Self is interiorised and in full repose. This state of the Self in complete interiority and repose must give us the certitude that its capacity or tendency for exteriorisation or creation and knowledge does not in essence break its unity and integrality. Knowledge is an overflow of the Self ; it is not the result of the Self's breaking into two. The world is there, creation is there (or is not there) and who can give us the certitude of a presence or an absence except the Self who is the witness of both creation and dissolution and who never enters into cause and effect relationship with these states. God, the awakener of an eternal creation without acting, simply by his presence, by being witness, brings into being the universe. And the *Gītā* affirms that such a witness is our very self, living in this body. In verse 22, Chapter XIII, the *Gītā* says : 'Spectator, supporter, enjoyer, the Great Lord, and also spoken of as the Supreme Self, is the Person Supreme in this body'. No wonder that the Hindu scriptures extol human birth and say that it is such a rare thing to get the human body, it is the sure testimony of divine grace.

God, the awakener of creation is the choicest object of our meditation. He who imparts His transparence to the world by His grace, does so because he wants man to profit by His grace and by His transparence. How can we fulfil His aim, unless we meditate on Him as transparent spirituality, as the white radiance which is not something abstract, but the embodiment of Love that is impartial ? When the *Gītā* says : 'Supreme Person', it is not to fall into personalism again. His person is made up of Light that is Love, made up of pure Sattva (spiritual particles). In order to *see* this person of Light, we must become transparent and when we become transparent, the question of 'a person who knows and another person to be known' disappears. When we contemplate on God as beyond cause-effect relation, we push our mind to an impasse where the beginning and the end of things are indistinguishable, there nothing has really begun, and when nothing has begun how can it end. This is the sort of realization that the *Gītā* wants to awaken in us, the realization of a Supreme Consciousness that knows no beginning nor end, no growth nor decay, that which is not confined within this human body but for which the human body serves as a channel to know its sublimity and grandeur.

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MEANING OF *SVATAHGRAHYATVA* IN REGARD TO PRAMANYA AND APRAMANYA

ANIMA SEN GUPTA

THE *Vedānta Paribhāṣa* has defined *svataḥ grāhyatva of prāmāṇya* (spontaneous apprehension of validity) in the following words :

> *doṣābhāve sati yāvat svāśraya grāhaka-sāmagrī-grāhyatvam.*
>
> Spontaneous apprehension is the fact of being grasped by the totality of causes that apprehend the substratum of the validity provided no defect is present.

The substratum of validity is *vṛtti-jñāna* and the cause of its cognition (*svāśraya grāhaka*) is the witnessing consciousness or *sākṣi-caitanya*. When the witnessing consciousness apprehends consciousness manifested in the form of *vṛtti*, it apprehends also the validity of *vṛtti-jñāna*. According to Sāṁkhya, however, the *svāśraya-grāhaka caitanya* is the consciousness in the form of *puruṣa* which is reflected through *buddhivṛtti*. When *puruṣa* is revealing the *buddhivṛtti* which is the substratum of validity, it is revealing the latter (i.e. validity) as well. Here, deficiency, in the flow of *sattvaguṇa*, and the consequent increase in the *tamoguṇa*, will be regarded as *doṣa*. Spontaneous apprehension of validity, therefore, can be defined in the Sāṁkhya in the words which have been used in the *Vedānta paribhāṣā* (i.e. *doṣābhāve sati yāvat svāśraya-grāhaka sāmagrī grāhyatvam*).

According to *Vedāntaparibhāṣā*, the conditions which cause apprehension of knowledge, cause apprehension of the validity of knowledge as well. Even then, validity is not always spontaneously apprehended, as in the case of doubt. So, the qualifying words, *doṣābhāve sati* are to be added to the definition of spontaneous apprehension of validity.

The *Vedāntaparibhāṣā* has admitted *parataḥ jñapti* of *aprāmāṇya* because according to the said text, the *grāhaka sāmagrī* of knowledge are the conditions only of the apprehension of validity in knowledge. These conditions, however, do not cause the apprehension of invalidity. Invalidity which is extrinsic to knowledge is known through inference. When proceeding to act on a particular cognition, we find that it does not satisfy our practical need, we infer that it is false.

If we hold the view that the Sāṁkhya, like the Advaita Vedānta, believes in *parataḥ jñapti* of knowledge, then the definition of *svataḥgrāhyatva* of validity only will be sufficient, but *svataḥgrāhyatva* of invalidity too, may be logically accepted from the Sāṁkhya point of view.* If this is so, then we shall have to formulate a definition to define *svataḥ-grāhyatva* of invalidity in knowledge. The Buddhists believe in *svataḥ aprāmāṇyavāda*, but they have not attempted to define *svatastha* of invalidity.

DEFINITION OF SVATAHGRAHYATVA OF APRAMANYA FROM THE SAMKHYA POINT OF VIEW

In the *Nyāyacintāmaṇi*, *svataḥ grāhyatva* of validity has been defined as apprehension of knowledge-apprehending conditions which are incapable of causing apprehension of invalidity in knowledge. By following this definition of *Nyāyacintāmaṇi*, we can formulate a definition of spontaneous apprehension of invalidity to suit the purpose of the Sāṁkhya school. The definition will be as under :

Spontaneous apprehension of invalidity means apprehension of knowledge-apprehend-

* Cf. My arficle on 'Samkhya Theory of Validity and Invalidity of Knowledge', published in the September 1966 issue of the *Vedanta Kesari*.

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ing conditions which are incapable of causing apprehension of validity in knowledge. If spontaneous apprehension of validity and invalidity is defined in the manner of *Nyāyacintāmaṇi,* then the fear, that one and the same knowledge may be both valid and invalid at the same time, can be removed easily from our minds. Validity is apprehended by such knowledge-apprehending conditions (*jñāna grāhaka sāmagrī*) which are *agrāhaka* of invalidity ; invalidity is, likewise, apprehended by such knowledge-apprehending conditions which are *agrāhaka* of validity. When the knowledge-apprehending-conditions contain an excess flow of *sattvaguṇa,* they become *agrāhaka* of invalidity. When, on the other hand, knowledge-apprehending conditions contain such a quantity of *tamoguṇa* which is just sufficient for hiding the true nature of the object but insufficient for keeping invalidity unrevealed to the perceiver, these conditions become incapable of causing apprehension of validity ; they are, however, capable of causing spontaneous apprehension of invalidity. I perceive a piece of long and thin object as a snake but I understand at the same time that my perception of the snake is invalid. The real object is something else, the nature of which has not been revealed to me. Thus when the *grāhaka samagrī* of *prāmāṇya* (in the form of the excess flow of *sattvaguṇa*) is not present, there is no apprehension of validity even though there is knowledge ; in a similar manner, when the *grāhaka sāmagrī* of invalidity is not present, there is no apprehension of invalidity in knowledge.

While defining the spontaneous apprehension of validity, the *Vedāntaparibhāṣā* has used the qualifying words, '*doṣābhāva*' in the place of the qualifying statement 'absence of the apprehending conditions of invalidity' (*aprāmāṇya grāhakābhāva*). According to the author of the *Vedāntaparibhāṣā, doṣābhāva* is not an adjective. It is negative and as such, it does not contribute anything from outside towards the validity of knowledge. *Doṣa,* on the other hand, is treated as an adjective and as an additional factor due to the presence of which, the Advaita believes in the *parataḥ jñapti* of invalidity. According to Sāṁkhya philosophy both *doṣa* and *doṣābhāva* may be treated as adjectives. These are, however, nothing but excess of *tamoguṇa* and excess of *sattvaguṇa* in knowledge. These are, therefore, not regarded as additional factors.

Further, the author of the *Vedānta Paribhāṣā* holds that invalidity which is of the nature of *tadabhāvavatī,* cannot be received directly by the *vṛtti* of *buddhi;* because *buddhivṛtti* is capable of catching directly the image of that thing only which has a form. Hence, invalidity is to be known through inference.

According to Sāṁkhya, *abhāva* can be perceived directly by means of *saṁyukta tādātmya sannikarṣa.* That there is no harm in admitting perceptual knowledge of *abhāva* by visual organ has been explained fully in the *Nyāyamañjari.* It is only in the case of *bhāvavastu* that the visual organ cannot perceive a thing without being related to it. This rule does not apply in the case of *abhāvavastu* where even though there is no *prāpyakārī saṁbhandha* still the visual organ is capable of apprehending negation directly. We should, however, remember that the perception of negation is relative to the perception of its substratum which should be within the range of vision. So, if *abhāva* can be regarded as an object of perception, then invalidity which is of the nature of '*tadabhāvavatī*' can be perceived spontaneously.

Everything that is a compound must sooner or later go back to its component parts. Whatever in this universe is the result of the combination of matter or force, must sooner or later go back to its components. Whatever is the result of certain causes must die, must be destroyed. It gets broken up, dispersed, and resolved back into its components.

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BEING AND BECOMING—AN ONTOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION

K. B. RAMAKRISHNA RAO

Is the concept of the Absolute inconsistent with the idea of change, evolution, progress or history ?

There is a logical view which maintains that the Absolute characterized as changing or as having history is thoroughly contradictory to its own being, and if associated, will lapse into something that it is not. The argument is : That which changes is relative, finite, contingent and cannot be absolute. For change involves time and space, implies parts, and the absolute, by its definition, is anything beyond these. The absolute is the unconditional, unrelational pure being, which does not change as occasions demand. As it is impartite, it does not allow change in parts. If it does, it is not different from 'having a cake (intact) and eating it too'.

Eastern and Western thought, as far as it is 'absolutist', agree upon this common conception of the absolute. Advaita conception of '*vivarta*' (transfiguration) is based on such an understanding and opposes all '*pariṇāma*' (transformation) call it change, evolution, modification, progress or history. As all these are phenomenal characteristics, they are appearances only. The Real is unchanging, perfect, neither changing nor becoming. All forms of Absolutism and Monism, in one way or the other, subscribe to this view. Though the Hegelian Absolute is a synthesis in a dialectic process, yet is free from an antithesis, and is beyond a further development in the process. For the entire dialectic process finds its logical culmination in the Absolute. It is the final aspect of the Being, where the historical becoming finds a finish. F. H. Bradley too thinks it incongruent to associate growth with the Absolute. For him the whole, the Absolute or the Reality is itself incapable of evolution. In an emphatic statement he says : 'We cannot attribute any progress to Absolute'.

It is against such 'absolute' theories that revolts occur, and have occurred in history. To cite only a few : In the West, William James and the pragmatists, B. Croce and the neo-idealists, Alexander and the realists treated the Hegelian or Bradleyan Absolute as 'block universe', and their philosophies as 'block philosophies', and preferred a dynamic conception of the Absolute. In India, the revolt against the '*Akṣara*' *Brahman* or Immutable Absolute was led by the Buddha, for whom Reality is Eternal Flux. He anticipated the Greek Heraclitus and the French Bergson in maintaining that not Being but Becoming is the Real. He denied a permanent substratum (an immutable *Ātman*), but posited a changing entity, which could even cease to be !

Taking first the arguments of the Flux-theorists, or of those who maintain that the Absolute is history (Croce), they cannot easily be brushed away. At least for us who are here in the world of experience, change is more real than immutability, drifting time is more real than immobile eternity. Even the Absolutist Hegel could not resist the temptation of the practical relativity and plurality, the changing phases of Nature leading to the self-conscious man. Hegel is one glaring example of being his own critic, who unwittingly refuted his own absolutism of the Absolute Idea by allowing for the different and the many, i.e. the changing, in the conception of the 'concrete universal'. Indeed, a thorough and non-compromising absolutist is a rare find, and, if discovered, is likely to be looked upon as either a fanatic or a doctrinaire trying to

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avoid the issue of the glaring change, or pretending to be blind to reality of the day-to-day world. There is nothing strange then, if 'Refutations of Idealism' and Absolutism are to be frequent, either in the West or in the East. All history, all possible science have been built on the tacit recognition of the reality of the observed change in the world of experience. Common sense fully endorses it, and it becomes hard to maintain a never-changing, immutable Absolute.

On the other hand, neither is it easy to throw away the Absolutist's non-compromising contention, that the Absolute is not to be sacrificed at the altar of common sense and empiricism. While the Western Absolutists like Hegel and Bradley succumbed and allowed compromises, the only exception, perhaps in the entire history of world philosophy, who did not accept the disfiguration of the Absolute for lack of human experience and understanding of it, is Śankarāchārya. It is hard to refute the logical position which he maintains: the Absolute cannot be mutable, is beyond time and space, has no history, no progress. The theory of '*vivarta*' (transfiguration) is a sequel to this fundamental tenet of his philosophy.

Is there, then, no solution to the problem of Being and Becoming? It is submitted here that much of the confusion can be spared, if the ontological implications of the Absolute are grasped. The non-compromising Absolutist, it can be shown, is neither a fanatic nor a doctrinaire. There has been an unfortunate tenacity in interpreting what constitutes the Absolute and seems to be originating in an unphilosophical fear that liberal interpretations, if permitted, would take away from the Absolute the stature that has been given traditionally to it, namely, that it is immutable, unchanging and eternal Being. It is submitted here that such fears are ill-founded, and a change in the perspective in looking at the Absolute, may not deprive it of its meaning and dignity. It is like this: The (immutable) Absolute Being, if looked at from the relative empiric and epistemological position, is the (mutable) Becoming. Ontologically, Being is simple immanence, and becoming is transcendence. Understood thus the opposition is resolved. If all immanence of the Absolute is taken as Being i.e., the basic existence of everything, all transcendence of the Absolute is just the ontological extension of the very being as the becoming, wrongly understood as 'changing' or 'mutable' in the empiric and epistemological sense. The *metaphysical* identity of Being as Becoming (Being=Becoming) was perhaps missed by the Buddha, and has been so all through by Fluxists. We must only examine the submission that in the new ontological perspective Being is Becoming. Clearly, it is a reversed understanding: Ordinarily what constitutes becoming is understood from our empiric experience (and all our sciences and history are built thus), but it is to be understood as the ontological extension of the *ever*-being. For Being to be Being should not cease to be Being. It is beyond the ordinary association of temporal change, it refers to the very existence of the Absolute, without which it cannot be Absolute, let alone its becoming the relative. The progress or change, which we associate with becoming is only *of thought*, but *not of the Being* as such. Perhaps a distinction between thought and Being i.e., the ontological aspect of it, will help us to understand the point made.

If ever the Absolute changes with the changing understanding of it, it ceases to be Absolute. Absolute, as the object and content of knowledge, may change. It is the Knowable Brahman or the Absolute (*Jñeya Brahman*). Clearly then, there are two aspects, the epistemological or the relative, i.e., the Known and the ontological i.e., Not-known. While the latter is the existential ultimate, the former is the epistemological or the logical conception of the Absolute, and may be progressively realized. The limits of realization are relative to the venturing spirit. While the venture may not cease, the Absolute 'endures', to borrow Bergson's terminology, though not his meaning of it. The significance of the

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acosmic aspect of the Absolute becomes clear here. For it aims to show the limits of human understanding and knowledge, and points to the transcendence of the Being, *till Being remains the object of thought*. The transcendence of the Being as the Ever-Being is the Becoming, understood as 'duration' by Bergson, and as '*santāna*' by the Buddha.

Between the two views that Reality is an unchanging immutable Absolute and that Reality is changing or Becoming, studied as a problem in the history of philosophy, it appears that the reason for the disagreement has been the misunderstanding of the perspective, as shown above, and that a straight opposition does not exist. In India, when the Buddha revolted against the Upaniṣadic *Akṣara* (Immutable) *Brahman* and formulated his '*kṣaṇika vāda*' (doctrine of momentariness) and '*anātma vāda*' (theory of non-substantiality or soulless-ness of permanent nature), and when Bhartraprapañca argued in favour of '*brahma pariṇāma vāda*' (theory of transformation of Brahman), they had clearly in view the positive empiric aspect of experience and a logic limited by the sensibilities of understanding and of empiricism. In fact, the Buddha never seems to have given much importance to the transcendent. The Brahma-*pariṇāma vādins* understood the transcendent from the non-transcendent angle i.e. interpreting the transcendent on the analogy of what is available in daily experience. The attempt of the Sāṁkhyas was obviously to overcome the difficulty of the Brahma-*pariṇāma vāda*, viz., the philosophical and the moral difficulty of the occurrence of the finite and the imperfect (either in the form of objects or of individual selves) and of moral evil or sin. What the Sāṁkhyas offered was the '*prakṛti-pariṇāma vāda*', which obviously redeems the entanglement of the Brahman and keeps it immaculate. But what they thought to be best was to drop Brahman altogether and to substitute the Puruṣa in their system, and to refer all *pariṇāma* or change or evolution to Prakṛti, which is sustained on an ontological difference from that of Puruṣa. What *becomes* is the Prakṛti, what *does not* is the Puruṣa. Though the system of the Sāṁkhya is beset with philosophical difficulties, yet it suggested an alternative or an escape from the problem of being and becoming.

When it was the turn of Śankarāchārya, he attempted to correct these perspectives and tried to interpret the Upaniṣadic Absolute from the ontological angle. His efforts at reconciling the '*abheda*' and '*bheda*' *śrutis* clearly indicate a significant hint at taking the right perspective. He took the transcendent view, as against the Buddha, which was based on his mystical and intuitional experience of the Absolute as the non-relative. The unimportance that he gave to the relative, the empiric and the common sense perspective of finding the phenomenal and the changing as the real, has unfortunately been missed in its import and appeal, with the result, we have the later revival of the realistic and dualistic trends of thinking of the theistic schools. This phase of Indian philisophy does not in any way represent a defeat of the absolutism of Śankara (as some believe) by a straight opposition, nor does it indicate philosophical progress (as some others believe) against non-dualism. The two pursuits have differences in vision; they are not linear, not parallel, but clearly tangential. It is also not certain, if the ontological import of Śankara was grasped by his own followers. For, the traditionally passed orthodox interpretation of the Advaitic Absolute is a glaring example of how a teacher can easily be misunderstood by his followers, let alone the critics.

Soul is not a force; neither is it thought. It is the manufacturer of thought, but not thought itself; it is the manufacturer of the body, but not the body. Why so? We see that the body cannot be the soul. Why not? Because it is not intelligent. A corpse is not intelligent, nor a piece of meat in a butcher's shop.

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THE DOCTRINE OF THE SELF IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

RUTH REYNA

Of all the philosophies of the world, there is none, I believe, that is more ancient than the Veda, and certainly there is none that has contributed so uniquely and so abundantly to the understanding of man.

The supreme achievement of Indian philosophy was its discovery of the Self as an independent, indestructible entity underlying the conscious personality and the bodily frame. Indian philosophy not only discovered this ever-abiding Self, but sought also to make this knowledge effective in human life.

But this great achievement, this unveiling of the indestructible, preternatural Self, was not come by in a unique moment in history. It merged as a philosophic and theological evolution from the primitive and enquiring spirit of man.

The enquiry into the meaning of life, the identity of man, the discovery of God—began with the ancient Veda, which are, in all probability, the earliest documents of the human mind, and the enquiry has continued age after age in progressive philosophical advance.

The evolution of the spiritual thinking of man has evidenced truly phenomenal progress in the sacred literature of India. In the early hymns of the oldest Veda, the *Ṛg Veda,* we witness the groping of man for answers to the mysteries of nature. Awed by the greatness and magnificence of the forces of the natural elements he sought to find reality in the personification of natural phenomena — and he devised hymns to the only gods he knew—to those who were so much more powerful than man. Hymns emerged to Sūrya, the terrible, desiccating sun ; to Agni, the all-consuming fire ; to Dyaus, the non-ending vastness of sky ; to Maruts, the black, defiant storms. The Vedic bards sang propitiating hymns to Āpas, the surging, angry waters, and to Uṣas, the dawn whom he was powerless to obstruct from its daily rising and setting.

But all this was not a useless gesture. It may be described as the worship of Nature leading to the discovery of Nature's God.

This compilation of some one thousand and seventeen Vedic hymns represents the earliest phase of the evolution of religious consciousness, where we have not so much commandments of priests as the outpouring of poetic minds — minds struck by the immensity of the Universe and the awesomeness of life. An evidence of this may be found in the hymn to Dawn :

> The radiant Dawns have risen up for glory in
> their white splendour like the waves of waters.
> She maketh paths all easy, fair to travel and rich,
> hath shown herself benign and friendly.
> We see that thou art good ; far shines thy lustre ;
> thy beams, thy splendours have flown up to heaven.
> Decking thyself, thou makest bare thy bosom,
> shining in majesty, thou Goddess Morning.
> —(*Ṛg Veda,* 1.48)

The Vedic seers subsequently, and by way of serious reflection, came to believe that all was not mere appearance, and in later hymns they turned from the gods of natural phenomena and evolved deities to demonstrate their evolving spiritual values. We find them honouring such deities as Viśvakarman, the All-creating ; Prajāpati, the Lord of Creatures ; Śraddhā, Faith ; Manyu, Wrath, and the like.

From these metaphysical considerations emerged the stirrings of doubt — doubt as to

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the validity of the many gods of nature — doubt as to the multiplicity of things. For although the endless variety of the world may suggest numerous deities, the unity of the world, they reasoned, surely implies one deity out of whom all things, man and gods, emanate.

We see this doubt emerging from the *Ṛg Veda* in such verses as, 'Of whom, they ask, "where is he?", of him indeed, they say, "He is not"' (II. 12. 5). Pursuing this doubt a superpersonal monism develops and the universe is explained in the Vedic *Hymn of Creation* (X. 129.4) as an evolution out of the Ultimate One. 'Desire entered the One in the beginning,' the hymn declares, 'It was the earliest seed — of thought, the product.' The *Hymn of Creation* foreshadows the distinction between the Absolute Reality (Brahman) and the personal God (Īśvara) which dominates the subsequent development of Indian thought.

Other hymns of the *Ṛg Veda* indicate that the seers realized that true religion comprehends all religions, a foreshadowing of the idea of universal unity, and the belief that God is One although he bears many names. 'They call him Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa and Agni; he is the heavenly bird Garutmān; to what is One the poets give many a name — they call it Agni, Yama, Mātariśvān.' (I. 164.46).

This, then, is the highest conception reached in the Vedic hymns — that of the One Reality which realizes Itself in all variety of existence.

Monotheism, the belief in one God, and philosophical monism, the pervading one-substance, is carried over into the Upaniṣads and eventually there evolves the most highly developed system of Indian thought — the nondual teaching of Vedānta. The Vedic search for the basic unity underlying the apparent multiplicity and ceaseless change of the universe was conducted along two lines of enquiry: 'What is the one and only essence that has become diversified?' was the first enquiry of the Vedic philosophers, and they sought the answer in their speculations upon the highest power behind the formations of the manifest world.

While in the second enquiry the seers directed their attention to the inward man and they asked, 'Who am I? What am I?' 'Where did I come from?' and, 'What is my destiny?' This self-analysis, this spirit of introspection, was developed as a parallel discipline to the speculative evaluation of external powers. The answer to both these enquiries — What is the power behind the world, and What is this self called man — came to a focus in the later centuries of the Upaniṣads and culminated in the abstract metaphysics of the Brahman-Ātman concept.

So it was that man gradually came to interpret human nature and to acquire an understanding of his position in the universe, and an understanding, as well, of the common fate of the human entity. In the Upaniṣads the search for the principle of life and the quest for the primal force reached the plane of reality in which everything proceeds as a phenomenal manifestation of the Brahman-Ātman reality or Absolute. And man came to learn that this ultimate power of the universe, the Brahman-Ātman reality, was also *his* power, for man learnt that he was not separate from, but identical with and as the immanent force of Reality.

This great power of the universe manifest in man is that of which the Upaniṣad says, it is that 'wherefrom words turn back, together with the mind, not having attained' (*Taitt. Up.*, 2. 4). This means, in effect, that the Ultimate Reality, or Brahman, cannot be known through the senses, for it transcends both the sensual and the conceptual spheres. Nonetheless, man is endowed with an intuitional vision that enables him to realize himself as Brahman. Yet, here is no dichotomy — there is no polarity between the real and the unreal in this strictly nondualistic realization; for, whether the Supreme Reality is phenomenal and visible, or whether it is transcendent and intuitional, both aspects are in essence, one.

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This, then, is the teaching of the Upaniṣads. This is, in essence, the source of the great formula of Vedantic truth, *tat tvam asi* — 'That thou art' — man — man the Self, man the Godhead, man the Power, man the One.

But what is this immanent, yet transcendent Self that we are? If we cannot see It; if we cannot hear It, feel It, cognize It — is it then, anything at all? This all-encompassing Self which is neither this nor that — is it our ego — our self-consciousness? That is, is it our consciousness of being an individual and discrete entity? Can we save this Self, or lose it, as the theologians tell us one may save or lose a soul?

No, it is none of these, for it is That which we cannot cognize with our limited, finite, phenomenal reason and perceptions. It is That which is none of what is phenomenal, and for this reason we cannot adequately describe the Self. Yet, when one Knows the Self, when one realizes this adamantine Self — he becomes fully aware of Its nature — for It is not 'another' — It is man, himself.

The question of the nature of the Self in the Indian philosophical view of the Self, is not so much psychological as it is metaphysical. The Self is not the ego, nor the *id*, nor is it the *libido* of Western concept. It is not the ego as the individual subject cognizing all within and outside the body. The Self, in the Eastern sense, specifically in the traditional Advaita Vedanta, is pure subject, cognizing all, yet never Itself is it an *object* of consciousness. This doctrine of the Self as pure consciousness does not in any manner entertain a duality — neither body and soul, nor bodies and souls, egos and the like.

The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* tells us that the Self is the subject which persists throughout the changes met with in the existential life. The Self is the common factor in the states of waking, dream, deep sleep, death, rebirth, and final deliverance. The Upaniṣads make it clear that the self (Self) which is man, consists in the truly subjective and can never become an object — thus affirming the nonduality of the Ātman.

Our eminent, contemporary philosopher, Dr Radhakrishnan, puts it this way: 'The Self,' he says, 'is not the bundle of qualities called the "me", but the "I" which remains beyond and behind inspecting all of these qualities. It is the subject in the truest sense and it can never become the object.' The Vedantic argument assumes, 'that whatever becomes an object belongs to the not-Self [or unreality], which explains the eventual unrealness of the world'.

The true Self, then, is not the body which is exposed to all suffering and imperfections — this is a material phenomenon. The body is only an instrument used by consciousness, while consciousness is not the product of the body. This is why the Universal Self, by its very nature as Pure Consciousness without subject-object duality, cannot be perceived but must be known through the intuitional processes which circumvent the intellectual faculties. As Śri Śaṅkara puts it: 'The Witness Self illumines consciousness, but never itself is in consciousness'.

The Self, then, as understood in Advaita Vedānta, is not a datum of experience — not an object to be cognized by a subject — the Self is not a thing seen, but is the *principle* of all seeing. The Self as pure subject cannot be a relation which requires a ground of relations, nor can it be a connection of contents, which is unintelligible without an agent who connects.

We are obliged under the Vedāntic analysis, to accept the reality of a universal consciousness which forever accompanies the contents of consciousness and persists even when there are no contents. This fundamental identity, which is the presupposition of both the Self and the not-Self, is called Ātman. Ātman is not non-existent simply because it cannot be represented objectively. Although man's intellectual capacities are not adequate for the comprehension of the Ātman-Brahman, still they have no existence except for It.

Man's deliverance lies in the Realization that he is Brahman. This is Self-Knowledge — the Knowledge of the self being the Self

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of all things. To know this Self, to *know* Brahman, is not enough — one must *realize* Brahman. That is, one must realize his identity as Brahman, for Brahman *is* Knowledge. Self-Knowledge and Realization are one and the same. Viewed from this perspective, from the level of Brahman, nothing is seen to be real — neither the existential self which we look upon as the ego, nor the world — nor the worlds, nor the universes. At the level of Brahman nothing is seen to be real but It — the Non-dual One. This is the heart and the core of Advaita teaching.

But what seems to be the outstanding perspective in nearly all of the schools of Indian philosophy and religion is the impermanence of the existential self. The Lord Buddha denies that any of the elements of the self has permanence. What men call the continuing immortal entity, or soul, is really resolved back into an impermanent aggregation of constantly changing states of being or skandas. It is the union of these constantly changing states of being that constitutes what we erroneously believe to be the individual self. At death the union is dissolved and the skandas disperse. Subsequent schools of Buddhism feature the impermanence of the phenomenal self, as merely a flux and flow of consciousness.

The Jainas, while positing an existential individual which they call a *jīva*, or soul, make its permanence contingent upon matter, and they manage to eventually assimilate the soul into a quiescent state which is, by all standards of logic, pure consciousness.

The orthodox schools of Indian philosophy point out individually, and in one manner or another, that the phenomenal self is one of mistaken identity — and this conforms to the Vedāntic teaching of the ultimate unreality of the phenomenal self.

However, the very fact that the impermanence of the phenomenal self gives way to the permanence of the Self as non-differentiated Absolute, avoids the horrendous limit situation inherent in Western religions and in Western existential philosophy.

According to Western religion and philosophy, from the moment of man's birth he is faced with the prospect of death. He is faced from his very birth with the disturbing thought of how he is to preserve his ego, his identity — as the inexorable hand of time brings him relentlessly day by day, hour by hour, closer and closer to that inevitable annihilation, which he is powerless to avoid. The Western man lives uncertain and disturbed, believing that he must accomplish eternal salvation within one limit-situation — one and only one span of life which is uniquely and individually his — from birth to death.

In this context, man's days, as it were, are numbered, and he is obsessed with the awfulness of seeing them slip by, one by one — bringing him ever nearer to the deep chasm of the void. The weeping and the wailing over the loss of a losable soul — the horrible prospect of losing one's *persona*, the mask of the of the ego, in the bottomless abyss of death ; the frantic, paranoiac attempt at fathoming the mystery of death — which exercise is in itself fatiguing to the spirit — all these dreadful fears, hopes and disappointments attendant to the limit situation of birth-to-death, are dissolved in the Indian teaching of Māyā, ignorance of the true Self.

Every knowledgeable Indian knows that the existential man is not the true Self. He has, therefore, no so-called immortal soul to lose in the dungeons of hell for all eternity. The seeking and experiencing Self-Knowledge — the Realization of the self as Brahman, is a happy prospect — and such a person, such a self can look upon birth and death and all that is in between, as a mere flash on the cosmic cinemascope, having no ultimate reality and, therefore, with no need to anxiously preserve any part of it. There is a certain stability emanating from the thought of the Self as Absolute, indestructible, quiescent, pure subject without relations, without polarities, without tensions.

A young Indian gentleman asked me this question : 'What are you?' he asked.

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I understood him to mean, what is my religion, my religious affiliation, what church do I belong to. 'Must I put a tag on myself?' I asked in return.

'Well, you *ought* to be *something*,' he declared.

'I have no sectarian belief,' I told him. 'I am not an adherent of any "ism" and I am not an "ist" of any sort. But why *ought* I to be something?' I asked.

'Well, if you have no sectarian faith to cling to,' the young man replied hastily, 'then you must be in an awful chaotic condition inside.'

My reply to this was: 'Quite on the contrary,' I told him, 'to entertain no sectarian belief is pure freedom — it is pure peace, for here there are no jealousies, no prejudices, and therefore, no tensions arise and no disruptions of tranquillity.'

This, unfortunately, is the way of the world today — the dire need for something to cling to, the need for the support of something other than the self. The very clinging to a sectarianism as an end in itself, this attachment to a phenomenon which man holds as ultimate, is the number one son of Māyā. To use a sectarian faith as a path to the top of the mountain is good — but when one stands on the peak of the highest hill and sees the Self and all that is, as Brahman, he has no further need for the sectarian path that led him to the top. For there, at the level of Brahman, the view is the same for all, and it is seen from this vantage point that all paths of religion merge into the Ultimate, Nondual Reality.

The religions of the world are beginning to feel the strain of their efforts to assure their votaries of salvation. They are beginning to feel the futility of convincing their believers of persistence after death as egoistic personalities. For adherents to the historical religious creeds are, in this scientific and materialistic era, questioning closely the old metaphysics and traditional church doctrines. Theologians are meeting the challenge and theologies are being adjusted to include a quiescent and blissful Absolute status as a final end to the human soul.

In some Western theologies this changeover is being effected at the expense of deleting the personal God from their apologetics. And this is being done in the face of the fact that the personal God has been the distinguishing feature of Western religions throughout the history of the modern world.

The Judaic theologians were, until recent times, adamant in their persistence of the dual theory — that of God and man as separate entities. God, they held, was omniscient, merciful, loving, just — endowed, as it were, with all the attributes of goodness defined by man. God was pictured by the orthodox Rabbis as a moral God of ethical character, interested in, and busily concerned with the affairs of man. Man was held to be created by God in the image and likeness of God, and although a separate entity, man, nonetheless, preserved the stamp of divinity.

It was this insistence upon personality as a key to ultimate reality, the argument that the existence of personality demands that the source of our being is personal, that led to the excommunication from the Judaic communion of the great Spinoza, the God-intoxicated man whose vision of the Absolute, and whose perception of the causal nature of man digressed from the traditional Israelite theology of a personal God.

However, in modern times Judaism has registered its protest against the primitive anthropomorphic views of God. For the thinking Jewish theologian, personality does not refer to the physical aspect of man, but to his inner essence — to the psychical, the rational, and the moral make up of man which we must employ in conceiving of God in the highest understanding of spiritual personality.

So it is that in the modern era, great Judaic theologian-philosophers such as Solomon Formstecher and Samuel Hirsch in the 19th century, and Herman Cohen in the 20th century, — these men of perspicuous intelligence and cosmic insight — discard the anthropomorphic concept and pose the transcendence of God — a God who, because he is the very basis and unity of nature and ethics, cannot,

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therefore, be absorbed by the world of ethics or that of nature. Thus we see the tendency of Judaism to merge the spiritual aspect of man into an Absolute Moral Spirit, which in turn presupposes the world and the Self in a type of nondualism.

In Christian doctrine a similar transition is taking place. From the doctrine of the Logos, which becomes the second person of the Christian Trinity, and whose functions are identified with the creative, illuminating and redemptive work of the Christ, there may be seen a direct deviation by the 20th century Christian theologians. Where once God was envisioned as an omniscient, all-loving, all-wise, divine person, and man was held to be a sinful, wretched, fearful creature, dependent upon Providential favour for the salvation of his once-created, but now immortal soul — a soul which he was at all times in danger of losing in the fearful abyss of hell — we now see a dignity bestowed upon man — a deletion of the tainted man — in the Christian swing toward the acceptance of an Absolute, or toward a World Soul, in which the soul of man may at last be assimilated without the prospect of such an horrendous fate as eternal damnation.

The doctrine of the Absolute is well-highlighted in the theology of the late Existentialist Christian theologian, Paul Tillich. Dr. Tillich preaches, not a Christianity in the traditional meaning, but a Christology which he terms the experience of a people, and he denies that the Christ episode was an actual event in history.

Tillich forthrightly demonstrates that man, who first rests in dreaming innocence in a non-differentiated Ground of Being, chooses to estrange himself from that Ground of Being and in a free act actualizes himself as the human entity and makes his world. Realizing his existential estrangement and the error he has made by this actualization, man struggles ever for reunification with his Ground of Being, which Tillich looks upon as a God without attributes.

Theologian Tillich holds out hope for man in his struggle to return to the Primal Absolute, in the symbolism of Christology, which Tillich points out, will direct man to the proper self-knowledge and will make him victorious in his efforts to conquer his existential predicament. The Christ, purely symbolic, represents the New Being who surrenders his finitude without losing the self. Christ as symbol points the way to the transcending of the 'awful abyss of meaningiessness' and offers hope to man to ultimately re-participate in true being. However, in man's return to the primal Ground of Being, the personal God of Christian tradition is cancelled out. The content of absolute faith for Tillich is the Absolute which he calls the 'God above God' — the God who appears and remains unaffected when the anthropomorphic God has disappeared in the anxiety of doubt.

It is hardly necessary to point out the trend of religions and theologies to a return to the basic idea of the Veda — whether or not the religions and theologies do this knowingly, the idea is there that man arose in some manner from an Absolute Being, differentiated himself by egoity, and now seeks to return and to be engulfed in a non-differentiated Absolute.

It is indicative of the trend of the times that man is confused, unstable, disgusted with what he has made of himself. Man is tired of searching for truths that prove to be tenuous when reached, and he seeks now, however subconsciously, or perhaps intentionally, not truths, but unity. He seeks the unity and the Bliss which is absolute. Man is, as it were, sick and tired of being man. He is fed up with grasping at a multitude of beliefs that only lead him in a round robin back to himself. Modern man struggles now to lose himself in the quiescence of an attributeless Absolute where tensions will cease — where he may rid himself even of the tensions that he finds in the belief and in the service to a personal God whom he never knows whether or not he has pleased.

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FOOT-NOTE

In essence and in effect this paper on the Self as both God and man, is completed, but I wish to add a foot-note.

Coming back to India, where the highest forms of religion and the most perspicuous theologies have been evolved independently of any other world philosophy, I wish to add a comment on the doctrine of the self as it is taught in the theology of a very young, as the history of mankind goes, but a very discerning theology and practical religion. It is that propounded by the Sikh Gurus.

The doctrinal position of Nanak has a surprisingly simple form. The consistency is due to his adherence to a single, central concept — the sovereignty of the one God, the Creator. God, Nanak held, created matter by drawing a veil of illusion over Himself — an illusion producing by its mystic power all the diverse forms of creation — the finite gods, Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva ; the heavens and the hells — earth, men, animals, and plants. In the words of the *Japji*, which may be considered the summary of the metaphysical doctrines of the Gurus, we read :

> One Maya in union with God gave birth to three acceptable children.
> One of them is the creator — (Brahmā), the second the provider (Vishnu), the third performeth the functions of destroyer (Shiva).
> He beholdeth them, but is not seen by them.
>
> (*Ādi Guru Granth*, No. 30)

Here Nanak gives us a living, full God, not an empty, abstract Deity. However, these finite creative agents, themselves created, are, after all, mere instruments, and Nanak's customary attitude was that of adoring the *True Name* as Himself Creator. In the Guru's own words, ' God Himself created the world and gave names to things ; He made Maya by His power '.

The world, then, is ultimately unreal. ' The world is very transient,' Nanak tells us, ' like a flash of lightning.' But Guru Nanak did not shrink from the parallel thought that man also goes the way of his world ; and he preached a salvation that does not lie in the promise of paradise, but in the absorption — the individuality-extinguishing absorption in God, the *True Name*. The doctrine of the immanence of God here becomes a necessary article of faith, and its prime requisite is the purification of the heart and the resting in God which is not at a distance, but which is within man.

It is this transience of the I-consciousness and absorption of the metaphysical self into the common ground of the Godhead, that is fundamental to Nanak's theology. In his teaching that the world, including man, is ultimately unreal, he does not imply that the world has no reality whatsoever, for it has, indeed. But the world's reality does not rest in the self-consciousness of sentient beings, but in the full reservoir of Pure Consciousness, which is God.

It is only in the Pure Consciousness, which is God, that subject and object are merged into one and where egoity gives way to the dynamic placidity of the Absolute which is both impersonal and personal, both and neither. And it is the development of I-consciousness, the belief in a separate self and its sufficiency that is the original sin from which all our existential pains and distresses arise. Self-negating, according to Nanak, is the remedy ; and upon this point he admonishes, ' O man, thou art a radiant being divine in essence ; discover thyself and the source whence thou hast come '.

But if the theology of Nanak is difficult for the understanding of the common man who is neither philosopher nor theologian, the Guru has wisely given us a simple, but fundamental formula for peace, joy, and bliss—he exhorts us to rise at the ambrosial hours of the fragrant dawn and to meditate upon :

> There is but One God—Manifested and unmanisted One,
> The Eternal and All-Pervading Divine Spirit,
> The Creator, the Supreme Being (omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent),
> Without fear, without enmity,
> Immortal Reality,
> Unborn, Self-Existent,
> Realized through the Grace of the Guru . . . . .

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ALL-INDIA COLLOQUIUM ON ETHICAL AND SPIRITUAL VALUES AS THE BASIS FOR NATIONAL INTEGRATION

SPONSORS : *Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Sanskrit Vishva Parishad, Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, and Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture.*

A REPORT

LIVING in India of today, specially in urban areas, is like hiking out in a forest and meeting dragons of varying ferociousness, and somehow escaping with your life and limbs. Shocking, disconcerting, wild and violent occurrences have become the norms of the day. Aggressive despair and militant cynicism dominate the psychology of many educated well-meaning people. You feel the agony but do not know where to seek the remedy. Using strong words for condemning supposed villains come round as a boomerang. You suffer, wait, and perchance, pray.

Amidst such dragon-occurrences unexpectedly on a very very rare occasion you suddenly come across a lily-occurrence in Indian affairs. And for a while it refreshes your mind and tends to fill you with hope. Whether or not the future will prove anything issuing out of it as worthwhile is a different question. By itself a lily-occurrence in Indian affairs, is an occasion to be grateful for.

Such a lily-occurrence happened in Bombay from 30th December, 1966 to 2nd January, 1967, when nearly three hundred thinking men and women of India met in an All-India Colloquium on Ethical and Spiritual Values as the Basis for National Integration.

THE PURPOSE OF THE COLLOQUIUM WAS THUS ANNOUNCED AND EXPLAINED :

The Purpose of the Colloquium :

'Till 1947, we were united in achieving freedom. On August 15, 1947, when Britain transferred power to India, we were inspired by memories of our ageless heritage and our common ideals, sanctified by our culture, custom and traditions and further cemented by the sufferings and sacrifices commonly and cheerfully shared in the crusade for Swaraj.

The first five years of the post-freedom era was a period of solid achievements, pregnant with promising prospects : the swift integration of 'Princely' India comprising 562 States covering about half of our territory and over 80 million people ; successful surmounting of the stupendous problems of migration of some 10 million people and their rehabilitation ; the framing and adoption of a democratic Constitution.

All this was possible because of the purposive all-India outlook, the spirit of oneness and the sense of mission which characterised all our activities.

We now seem to be fast losing this perspective.

Centrifugal forces and group-sentiments have been sedulously at work in our country during the recent years, impairing our unity and submerging our robust nationalism.

We are trying to build up so-called regional cultures forgetting that they are but local versions of the one basic Indian culture.

Even a secessionist outlook is discernible in certain regions.

All this has resulted in the larger and long-term interests of the country being neglected, if not forgotten, for small transient regional gains of doubtful value.

We recaptured the spirit of sacrifice and national unity in a measure when our territorial integrity was threatened in October 1962 and again in September 1965. Such unity and all-India outlook should not be occasional ; they must not be an upsurge

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only in times of threat to our national security.

In our gigantic projects and plans to reconstruct the nation, we totally ignored the aspect of reconstruction of man by simultaneously fostering ethical and spiritual values, which alone go to build character; for, character alone can provide the solid foundation for stable reconstruction — economic, social and political.

Within just two decades of Gandhiji's martyrdom, we have forgotten his insistence that Satya and Ahimsa should be the twin foundations of our private and public life.

The youth of the land are being denied the inspiration and guidance provided in our great sacred texts and by the pioneers of Indian Renaissance like Ram Mohan Roy, Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Rama Tirtha, Sri Aurobindo, Ramalinga Swami, Ramana Maharshi, Gandhiji and others.

This Colloquium is intended to draw attention to this danger and to hammer out means to avert it and save the country from the possibility of disintegration and the chaos which will result from it.'

It was the fervent hope of the sponsors of the Colloquium to produce a national awakening, to effect a process of introspection and create a climate of moral transformation and spiritual uplift so that the unity and integrity of India may escape erosion. It was also hoped to formulate a follow up machinery to propagate and implement the conclusions that would be arrived at in the Colloquium.

Participants—whose expenses for travelling and staying in Bombay during the Colloquium were borne by the sponsors—came from all over India from all walks of life. There were nuns, vice-chancellors, Members of Parliament, industrialists, politicians, religious heads, educationists, philosophers, scientists, authors, social workers, sociologists, retired and functioning judges, executives, editors, journalists, Ministers from Central Government, exponents of cultures, Governors of States, professors of various departments, members of various national committees, economists, trade unionists, poets, artists, art critics, publishers, music directors, mass media officials, advertising professionals, advocates, solicitors, men representing national and international cultural societies, thinkers, research scholars and also monks. Besides there were the sponsors themselves, Dr K. M. Munshi, Shri R. R. Diwakar and Swami Ranganathananda, the collective wisdom and inspiration of whom kept the discussions of such a heterogeneous group to purposive directions.

Though the Colloquium was sponsored by four organizations it was in fact the devoted services of the enthusiastic workers of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, that made it possible. It is not an exaggeration to say that this was perhaps the first time that a concerted non-official effort of such dimensions and such comprehensiveness was organized to consider a problem of such urgency and national importance.

In the absence of the President Dr. S. Radhakrishnan due to unavoidable reasons, Dr. P. V. Cherian, Governor of Maharashtra, inaugurated the proceedings on the evening of December 30, 1966. In their addresses at the inaugural session Dr. K. M. Munshi, Sri R. R. Diwakar and Swami Ranganathananda explained the origin, scope and purpose of the Colloquium. Sri Jagjivan Ram, Sri V. V. Giri, Bishop C. J. G. Robinson, Prof. M. S. Thacker, and Sri K. Balasubramania Aiyar also addressed the session.

The deliberations of the Colloquium were carried in the following seventeen sections under the guidance of respective chairmen: 1. Ethical and Spiritual Values. 2. Religion and Secularism. 3. Group Consciousness and Social Order. 4. The Women, the Home and Sane Sex Order. 5. Literature and Fine Arts. 6. Journalism, Advertising, Radio and T.V. 7. Motion Pictures. 8. Education and Youth. 9. Sanskrit and National Unity. 10. Agriculture and Rural Development. 11. Economic Order, Industries and Urbanisation. 12. Science and Technology. 13. Employer—Employee Relations. 14, Law and Judiciary. 15. Power and Morality, Leadership, Politics and Administration. 16. The World and India. 17. National Integration.

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Papers which were previously sent by participants on the basis of an elaborate questionaire were distributed in print in advance for discussion. Impromtu speeches were also made and lively discussion followed.

The Rapporteur went about gleaning the concensus of discussions as they continued in various sections.

At the end of all discussion the Colloquium passed the following resolutions :

This All-India Colloquium on Ethical and Spiritual Values as the Basis of National Integration, consisting of representatives from various parts of the country, and belonging to various sections of society hereby resolves that :

(a) With a view to consolidation and continuing the work which this Colloquium has started, the following members constitute a Committee, as a continuing body of the Colloquium to carry out its aims and objects and to give shape and form to the main question of National Integration in all its aspects as discussed by the Colloquium :

1. Dr. K. M. Munshi, Chairman.
2. Dr. R. R. Diwakar, Co-Chairman.
3. Swami Ranganathananda, Co-Chairman.
4. Sri Jagjiwan Ram, Union Minister for Labour and Employment.
5. Sri M. C. Chagla, Union Minister for External Affairs.
6. Sri C. Subramaniam, Union Minister for Food and Agriculture.
7. Sri V. V. Giri, Governor of Mysore.
8. Dr. Karan Singh, Governor of Jammu & Kashmir.
9. Sri Morarji Desai, Chairman, Administrative Reforms Commission.
10. Sri M. C. Setalvad, Former Attorney General.
11. Smt. Lilavati Munshi.
12. Prof. M. S. Thacker, Member, Planning Commission.
13. Sri K. Santhanam, Chairman, Integration Sub-Committee of the Gandhi Centenary Committee.
14. Sri N. H. Bhagwati, Former Vice-Chancellor of Benares Hindu University.
15. Sri K. P. S. Menon, Former Ambassador to China and U.S.S.R.
16. Sri H. M. Patel, I.C.S. (Retd.).
17. Sri V. K. Gokak, Vice-Chancellor, Bangalore University.
18. Sri P. H. (Rao Saheb) Patwardhan.
19. Justice Tek Chand, Chairman, Prohibition Committee.
20. Prof. C. N. Vakil, Economist.
21. Dr. K. G. Saiyadin, Director, Asian Institute of Educational Planning & Administration, New Delhi.
22. Sri Durgadas, Journalist.

23 to 26. One representative each from : Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Sanskrit Vishva Parishad, Gandhi Smarak Nidhi and Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture.

(b) 1. Sri S. Ramakrishnan, Executive Secretary, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay.
2. Prof. P. Sankaranarayanan, Director, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, New Delhi.
3. Sri M. P. Zaiwala, Secretary, Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, Bombay.

shall be the Secretaries of the Committee.

(c) "This Committee shall have powers to co-opt.

(d) "The main object of this Committee shall be to consolidate and continue the work of this Colloquium and take all such steps as may be necessary to that end by :

(i) continuing to focus the attention of the country on ethical and spiritual values as fundamentals to National Integration and national welfare,

(ii) finding out ways and means of contacting and co-ordinating the efforts of others in the country in this field,

(iii) evoking the enthusiasm and co-operation of all sections of the people for implementing the programmes of this Colloquium."

The concluding Plenary session which started with prayers of different faiths by votaries of respective faiths, was presided over by Dr Zakir Hussain, Vice-President of India. The session was addressed by Dr. K. M. Munshi, Sri R. R. Diwakar, Swami Ranganathananda, Cardinal Gracias, Swami Akhandananda, Dr Karan Singh, Srimati Rukmini Arundale, Sri K. P. S. Menon and Sri H. N. Kunzru.

What use such a Colloquium : some have bitterly asked. For one thing, to ignore the power of thought is not the height of wisdom. It is from the right and deep thinking that mighty and beneficent actions spring. Thinking is not less needed in India of today than food. Not even to think when things disinte-

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grate before your eyes may not also be considered a very practical measure. Participants had the feeling that when the very situation which has caused concern, was itself drawing people together to express the will of the nation to do something effective, then, to be sure, there was basis for hope and work. Some participants could report to the gathering what practical steps they had already taken in their own spheres long before the idea of the Colloquium was mooted. The amount of interest their unadorned speeches evoked proved that this gathering though engaged in discussion was indeed doing-oriented.

What will really be done in the future is anybody's guess. But this can be truly said that the idea of the Colloquium was nobly conceived and earnestly carried with the willing co-operation of the thinkers of India representing all walks and avocations of life. And this augurs well for India. 'One step enough for me' now. Let us now take one more step continuing this now.

By and large this was a Colloquium of the elders. It just so happened that the younger generation, but for a sprinkling, was really not included. But in all deliberations the younger generation was most vitally involved as far as the aspirations of the Colloquium were concerned. The lead was thus given in a partial vacuum. The Colloquium could have made a more significant impact if it had carried its discussions before the listening ears and watching eyes of the younger people. Now if we give them our conclusions, however wise they may be, in neat packages, they may not even care to open them. Today's moral leadership, such being the time-spirit, has to express itself as an interesting play in participation. Even the irreverent is ready to play, but you cannot force him to play.

Ways need be found, therefore, in any future programme to place the younger generation in the centre of the stage of such a Colloquium so that they may learn while playing their part, and also play their part while learning—and thus enjoy the whole process of becoming.

SWAMI BUDHANANDA

MYTHS OF THE DOUBLE-HEADED EAGLE

M. V. SRIDATTA SARMA

I

GANDABHERUNDA or the double-headed eagle is a unicorn. It served as an emblem of the Kadamba chieftain Chāmuṇḍarāya, who owed allegiance to the Chāḷukya king Someśvaradeva as a Mahāmaṇḍalika. He styles himself as Gaṇḍabheruṇḍa. He has to his credit a monument in the form of a pillar erected in 1047 A.D. at Belgāmi in Shikārpur Taluk. In the temple of Jagadekamalla is set up a monolithic figure of Gaṇḍabheruṇḍa which is half-human and half bird. With the exception of its two heads which are twined, the figure is completely human. The Gaṇḍabheruṇḍa served as the insignia of the rulers of the Vijayanagara dynasties — Pratāpa Kṛṣṇarāya, Acyutarāya and Sadāśivarāya.[1] We find sculptural representations of this eagle in the monuments of the Hoysaḷa as also the Keladi chiefs. The rulers of Mysore adopted this design in their coat-of-arms.

II

Mythological accounts disclose that this bird is the very embodiment of great prowess,

[1] In the epigraphs, Immadi Devaraya styles himself as Rayagajagandabherunda (the suppressor of feudatories in the form of vassals etc.). Krishnadevaraya and Sadasivaraya called themselves by the caption Gajangagandabherunda. Achyutaraya assumed the title Aribhagandabherunda (one who is terrible and formidable to the enemies).

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mightier than all forms of creation. Iconographic details are given in the Dhyānaślokas from the Gaṇḍabheruṇḍamantramālikā as also the Devatādhyānamālikā. This bird is reckoned as an incarnation of Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu emerged in the form of Nṛsimha with a view to vanquish the fiend Hiraṇyakaśipu and bless his devotee Prahlāda. Though the fiend was conquered, Nṛsimha was still in a state of excitement (Āveśa). The Śaiva *gaṇas* could not bear his lustre (*tejas*) and they approached Śiva for redress and offered supplications. Śiva's army entered the arena. Śiva assumed the form of Sarabha,[2] with a view to counteract the effects of the terrible form of Nṛsimha which resembled the submarine fire and pacify him. Says the *Sarabhopaniṣad* thus :

yo ghoram veśamāsthāya sarabhākhyam maheśvaraḥ
nṛsimham lokahantāram sañjaghāna mahābalaḥ.

'That Maheśvara assuming the terrible form of the Sarabha struck Nṛsimha, the destroyer of the world.' In the Śatarudriya Samhita of the Śiva Purana, there is an anecdote connected with the Sarabha episode (Chapters X to XII). The Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava forces continued to counteract and in the end, Viṣṇu assumed the form of Gaṇḍabheruṇḍa in that chain of destruction.

III

The dhyāna ślokas given in the Gaṇḍabheruṇḍamantramālā as also the Devatādhyānamālikā reveal that there are two forms of Gaṇḍabheruṇḍa viz., two-headed and eight-headed. According to these two works, the two-headed form possesses hard and adamantine beaks and claws, is formidable and powerful, is three-eyed, pervading the entire cosmos, possessing innumerable hands with missiles like the conch, discus and pestle and different varieties of weapons, and devouring crores of Sarabhas. The face of this bird resembles Garuḍa. It is said that with its two wings, this bird fights innumerable foes in the form of fiends rendering the entire cosmos rolled into a mass. Its terrible claws are described as resembling the hard and mighty thunderbolt of Indra. In another account, this form is said to possess a hundred hands (*śatabāhum nīlakaṇṭham śvetavarṇam trilocanam*) and is identified with a form of Nṛsimha (Jvālanṛsimha). It is decorated with different forms of serpents and styled 'Destroyer of serpents" (Bhogikulāntakaḥ).

The eight-headed Gaṇḍabheruṇḍa has faces of different animals such as the lion, tiger, horse, sow, monkey, bird, bear and also man, possessing innumerable hands with weapons like ploughshare, pestle, mace, conch, discus (*dvātrimśatkotibāhum halamusala gadā śaṅkhacakrādi hetiḥ*) and devouring sarabhas, birds and elephants. It presents a look of sparkling fire, tongues blazing like lightning, wings as threatening as the thunderbolt. This may be the cosmic Puruṣa manifesting Himself in different forms.

'hīrādbhimau ca pakṣau hṛdaya jaṭara gāhyasta kālyāśca durgāḥ.
uru dvau rudra kālau khagamṛga nṛhari gaṇḍabheruṇḍa rūpāḥ.'

The eight Kālis and Durgas embrace this form. Its two thighs in the form of Rudras represent the Supreme Spirit regarded as the destroyer of the universe and the very personification of the destructive principle. This Nṛsimha is, in short, a blending of the two forms of the bird and the mammal. It may be said that the Gaṇḍabheruṇḍa symbolizes regal power. Its descriptions give us the impression of the paramountcy of this power.

IV

We have sculptural pieces in the double temple of Rameśvara and Virabhadra at Keladi[3] portraying the Gaṇḍabheruṇḍa in the

[2] Sarabha is a fabulous animal said to have eight legs and to be stronger than the lion.

[3] Keladi is in the Sagar Taluq of Shimoga District, Mysore State.

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ceiling. This relates to the period of the Keladi rulers (1681 A.D.). 'Within a variegated but harmoniously blended headpiece is cut out the Gaṇḍabheruṇḍa with two necks and two beaks, but with one body from below the neck and two legs ..... In each beak, the eagle holds tight a fierce looking lamblike lion, holding in its closed up claws is a tusker. In its jewelled right leg it holds another elephant (a tusker) by whose proboscis hangs an athlete; likewise in its jewelled left leg it holds another elephant (similarly a tusker) which has its proboscis twisted round its left foreleg. A peculiarity of these creatures hanging one by the other is that there is life in them which is in keeping with the popular Indian belief, which regards these animal figures as 'real animals standing one upon the other'.[4]

In the Keśava temple at Belur[5] which was constructed during the reign of the Hoysala king Viṣṇuvardhana (1117 A.D.) is depicted the well-known chain of destruction — the double-headed eagle attacking the sarabha, which in turn seizes a lion. The lion takes hold of an elephant, while the latter is depicted as grasping a snake; in the last scene of this series, it is seen that the snake is busy in the act of swallowing a rat (an echo of the *Sabdadatta Jātaka*).

In the Bucheśvara Temple (Hassan Disttrict), there is a similar representation of the chain of destruction. In this temple, we see the very same series of sketches, the only difference being that the serpent is busy swallowing an antelope instead of a mouse. The clever artist has posted a sage to stand nearby to reflect and wonder at this sight.

In a ceiling design of sculpture in the Ādinārāyaṇa Temple at Kaivar, Kolar District (11th century A.D.) is portrayed a scene in which a Gaṇḍabheruṇḍa with a human body holds an elephant as also a sarabha.

V

In the gold *varāhas*[6] as also half-varāhas struck by Pratāpa Achyutarāya(weighing 52 and 26 grains respectively), the figure of the Gaṇḍabheruṇḍa holding an elephant in each of its beaks and claws is seen. In one of the provincial types of copper coins issued by the Vijayanagara rulers, the figure of the Gaṇḍabheruṇḍa is used as a motif.

[4] cf. Mysore Gazeteer.

[5] This temple in the Hassan District of Mysore State is famous for its architectural beauty.

[6] The denomination of a gold coin.

A VEDANTIC PRECEPT OF PERFECTION

BR. SUDHANSHU

OUR notion of perfection involves both a sense of value and a sense judgment. When we claim a certain thing to be perfect we estimate it with reference to itself. This is called in Vedanta *vastu vichāra*. Of course, in Vedanta there is only one *vastu* and that is Brahman — the supreme consciousness. Brahman alone exists, all other things are imperfections, modifications, which according to Vedanta, are not true. *Svarūpa* or the real nature is the only truth about a thing and the perfection of a thing too is there in the real-content and not in the so-called appearance of the thing. 'Being' then according to Vedanta is the perfection and not the 'becoming' of a thing.

Becoming is just a struggle for it. Progress and evolutions are all our attempts to get back this lost perfection within ourselves. History is merely a record of this search after truth. But Vedanta says that truth is never lost. We are that, ever-existence. It is always there in everything and being. It is inherent.

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Our notions of perfection are relative, arising from our Self-forgetfulness. For us all reality is supposed to be buried in our own ignorance.

Actually it is not so. We are all perfect. Imperfections are all super-impositions, false and shifting by nature. Imperfections have no value or existence of their own. Above all, imperfections are contradictions and all our conflicts prove a negative feature of our being.

On the other hand Vedanta evinces in this process of contradictions a positive urge within ourselves, for the realization of the perfect nature of our conscious-being. So we are the same being even in our fight against imperfections. That is the reason why a Vedantin never gets disheartened at the sight of the conflict he sees in this world. This clear perspective of the reality helps a Vedantin to maintain his position undisturbed beyond all oppositions and struggle. A Vedantin who is firmly established in his ideal will never see these imperfections of the world as objectively real. Thus he will be relieved of the botheration of perfections and imperfections and be, throughout his life, a fearless champion of perfection and perfection alone.

Secondly, his subjective standpoint will always be to seek perfection within himself. For he knows it to be his own *svarūpa* and that he is very certain to reach it. Very often we escalate our conflict unnecessarily by making others responsible for our failures, forgetting our own imperfections. This makes the situation still worse. Vedanta never believes in making such ineffective noise about imperfections in the world outside. To fight and brush off our imperfections from within is the right process and in this respect Vedanta always approaches subjectively. Blaming others shows the perversion of one's own self. A Vedantin should never start at the other end of life, i.e., point his figure only against the environment and the life. After all, environment is what we make it. A Vedantin will therefore start from his own end, for it is the nearest and most accessible point to him. The ideal of perfection in Vedanta is Self-consciousness and not anything else. Privilege-mongering may be anything but not Vedanta.

Thirdly, as Vedanta believes in the fundamental divinity of everything the superficial distinctions between the objects will be subjected to severe judgment and an assumption of basic equality among them will enrich our view of perfection that is in all. With it a real and penetrating discrimination will start and our opportunity of attaining perfection through Vedanta will be greater.

Mostly a sense of pessimism and corrective tendency prevails in our approach to the world. Whereas Vedanta will seek to replace this method by bringing more of optimism and belief in ourselves and our fundamental nature. An ideal Vedantin will never go to correct others but only try to bring an awareness of perfection from within and thereby help others in awakening the potentiality inherent in their very nature. A universal fellowship and love is the guiding *motif* in Vedanta.

Further, in the highest realization of Vedanta there is no consciousness of the divergence between the individual and society. There is complete harmony between them in the scheme of Vedantic perfection. Through its emphasis on the individual development and perfection, Vedanta claims to attain a universal ideal free from clan concepts, religious dogmas and national prejudices. The idea of infinite progress in Vedanta is never static. The wide gap between the essence and the existence of our lives can be fully covered by Vedanta. Its values are inevitable for an eternal peaceful life.

Moral, aesthetic or technological perfections are all bits of perfections and ordinarily our ideals of perfections are just reflections of our own mind and tendencies. Vedanta is very cautious against these complex psychological projections. Stern is the discipline of Vedanta, so modulated that it can very well distinguish a project from perfection. Schemes are not perfections. Perfection is something basic and essential to our being and a Vedan-

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tin approaches perfection in its entirety. The whole of perfection is the end of Vedanta and not any part or aspect of it. Vedanta concerns itself with the ultimate sense of a supreme value, of realization, where all ends, social or moral, merge into a supreme reality of absolute perfection.

Finally, Vedanta is more a practice in life than a thing to be merely preached. The principles of perfection are for experiencing. Perfection according to Vedanta is a life-transforming inspiration, eternally stretching itself for the good of mankind. Our latent perfection is to be manifested and for that we must tune ourselves to our own conscious nature.

CRITICISM OF THE ADVAITA CONCEPTS OF EXPERIENCE, LANGUAGE AND REALITY

P. NAGARAJA RAO

EXPERIENCE is a central concept to all Indian philosophical systems and it is the master concept of Advaita. The object of all the *darśanas* is *mokṣa,* which is a form of transcendent experience that radically puts an end, to what is comprehensively described as the three-fold suffering (*tāpatraya*). It is a state of existence where all tensions and strains are overcome, disbeliefs dispersed and which is full of bliss. *Mokṣa* is the master-word in Indian Philosophy. The ' Experience ' described is not all of the same type. The theistic schools of Vedanta, of Ramanuja and Madhva, describe the *experience* as that of the soul who is emancipated from bondage (*samsāra*) and enjoys the full grace of the Lord. The experience is of a subject, and there are objects of experience, and it is related in a transcendent space. *Mokṣa*-experience is significant with this difference that it has none of the limitations of empirical experience. It is broadly described as *aprākṛta* (not belonging to matter). The transcendent experience has content and through instruments of knowledge the soul experiences it. It is full of bliss unmixed with sorrow or pain as in human empirical experience. The experience is acquired through the grace of the supreme Reality, Lord Nārāyaṇa. Experience and Supreme Reality are not one and the same.

To the Advaita philosopher, as formulated by Śankara's (parama guru) preceptor's preceptor, Gauḍapāda or the post-Śankara thinkers, Experience is the same as Reality. Reality is experience.[1] It is called Brahman. Brahman is not of the nature of an object which we can know through (*pramāṇas*) instruments of knowledge. Reality is a *conscious-principle.* It is a non-composite homogeneous non-dual reality. It is unconditioned existence, unexcellable bliss and is infinite. It is not *brute-matter* but supreme consciousness. It is a unique type of consciousness which is neither an object nor a subject. It is self-luminous. It manifests all other objects without needing any other entity to manifest its own self. We do not light a candle to see the sun. It is ever present at all times. It is never negated at any time or in any state of consciousness, past, present or future, or in deep sleep, waking life, or dream state. Brahman cannot be described in terms of any predicate, for the simple reason that there is nothing real besides Brahman to predicate it with. Further, the category of predication entails relationing, and the concept of relation, in the end, is

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1 *idam tu pāramārthikam, kuṭastha nityam, vyomavat sarvavyāpī sarva vikriyā rahitam, nitya tṛptam, niravayavam, svayam jyotiḥ svabhāvam . . tadetat aśarīratvam mokṣākhyam.*

Śankara's Commentary on V.S. I.i.4.

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proved to be self-discrepant however useful it may be in ordinary life.

Śaṅkara holds that ultimate Reality is validated by Experience (*anubhava*). Experience is the nature of Reality. It is a subject-object-less consciousness. It is immediate and not mediated through any *pramāṇas*. Language cannot directly indicate its connotation. It can indirectly describe it through stating its *qualification per accidens*, and it can be known by using the negative method. The central fact is Reality and its validity is demonstrated only by Experience.[2] The experience is not that of a subject. There are no differences or divisions in it. It is established by one's mystic experience, but believed on the authority of the śruti and is also sought to be established by reasoning. Reasoning can seek to demonstrate it and not discover it. '"Transcendent Experience" is not the same as intellectual knowledge, but it is not discontinuous with it,' is the verdict of Dr. Radhakrishnan. Experience is central. Knowledge should result in experience.

II

The theistic schools of Vedanta have criticised the Advaitin's concept of Reality, as 'indeterminate Experience', in different ways. The criticism is on several counts. The very concept of Brahman is discredited on the epistemic ground that it is unintelligible and unproven and impossible to conceive. The Nyāya school and the theistic schools of Vedanta hold that there cannot be a contentless knowledge. Knowledge has always an object. Further, there is no object which is attributeless. An attributeless object is equivalent to absolute Non-existence (*śunya*). In the words of Hegel '*pure being is non-Being*'. Hence, they equate the Advaitin's concept of *Reality* with void (śunya). Madhva declares 'that what māyāvādins call Brahman is the same as the void of the Mādhyamikas'.[3] To declare that there is an Experience without an object or a subject is not true to human experience or scripture, says Madhva. Madhva holds that the different descriptions in the Upaniṣads of Brahman which are apparently contradictory are all of single import.* Some passages describe the glory of Brahman as endowed with attributes like omniscience, lordship, inner-rulership, beauty and goodness.[4] Some other passages describe it as free from limitations like sin, misery and liability to physical embodiment.[5] Yet other passages describe him as beyond the reach of mind and speech to bring home to us the complete inaccessibility of the Lord's nature to human reason and understanding.[6] There are a few passages which declare it as the only one that exists, in order that one might seek it to the exclusion of all else, because of its importance.[7] There are some other passages which describe the Lord as the Self of all, hinting that the Lord is the source of all existence, consciousness and activity in the universe.[8] Hence Madhva rejects scriptu-

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[2] *kim tu śrutyādayo anubhavādayaśca yathā sambhavam iha pramāṇam, anubhavāvasānatvāt bhūta-vastu-viṣayatvācca brahma jñānasya.* Ibid. I.i.2.

The ultimate Reality is no doubt to be known through scripture but if the knowledge conveyed by it is to bring *moksha*, one should verify it through one's own living experience in the form 'I am Brahman'.

[3] Madhva's *Aṇu Bhaṣya*, II.ii.29.

* *Sarvāṇyapi hi vedānta-vākyāni-asankhyeya-kalyāṇa-guṇākāram sakaladoṣa-gandha-vidhuram, ekarūpameva param brahma nārāyaṇākhyam pratipādayanti. kintu,*

[4] *kānicit, sarvajñatva-sarveśvaratva-sarvāntaryāmitva - soundarya - oudāryādi - guṇa-viśiṣṭatayā.*

[5] *kānicit, apahatapāpmatva-nirduḥkhatva, prākṛta - bhautika - vigraha - rahitatvādi - doṣābhāva viśiṣṭatayā,*

[6] *kānicit, atigahanatājñāpanāya vāk-mana-sāgocaratvākāreṇa.*

[7] *kānicit sarvaparityāgena tasya-eva-upādānāya advitīyatvena.*

[8] *kānicit sarvasattāpratīti-pravṛtti-nimittatā-apratipatyartham sarvātmakatvena, ityevamādyanekaprakārāiḥ paramapuruṣam bodhayanti.. tataḥ*

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ral support for the indeterminate nature of Ultimate Reality. As for equating *Experience* and *Reality,* Madhva's criticism is the common one, that such a description is subjective. Experience can never be objective. Madhva does not accept the *vivartavāda* of Śaṅkara, that Brahman appears as the *many*. The criterion of the Real for Madhva is not unsublatability in all three times. It is that which exists some time at least in Space and Time. There are many reals. The only independent Real is the Lord, all others are dependent reals.

Brahman for the Advaitin cannot be described, for the simple reason it is indeterminate (*nirviśeṣa*). Though Brahman is indeterminate the Advaitin does not despair of his efforts to demonstrate its existence. It can be experienced as the innermost nature of one's own self. Experience is the final proof. It is a form of self-realization. Further, the Advaitin makes use of language indirectly to denote Brahman. This he does in two ways as concession to other schools of thought. He follows the method of negation (*via-negativa*) *neti-neti* and describes Brahman as *not this, not this.* This is the application of the method of residue (*pāriśeṣya-nyāya*). What remains as residue after all negations is the Absolute. Secondly, Brahman is described in two ways (1) by stating its essential characteristics (*svarūpa lakṣaṇa*), (2) by describing its accidental qualifications (*taṭastha-lakṣaṇa*), which remain only in the thing for some time and distinguishes it from the rest and is not its essential characteristic. Vedantic texts define the essential characteristics of Brahman as, 'Being Intelligence and Bliss'. (*Tait.* II. i. 1.) Even these attributes are not different from Brahman. Hence, they denote and serve only to distinguish it from their opposites, i.e., Brahman is not-unreal (*anṛta*), not-insentient (*jaḍa*) and not of the nature of misery (*duḥkha*). The Advaitin holds the view that language serves to distinguish and indirectly denote the Absolute. The Upaniṣadic passages that refer to Brahman as the cause of origination, sustentation and destruction of the universe are treated as *qualification per accidens (taṭastha lakṣaṇa)* of Brahman. Words are said to indicate the Absolute in a secondary sense (*lakṣanārtha*). The secondary sense is resorted to when the primary sense does not fit in.

The central criticism of the Dvaitin against this position is that all talk about the *secondary sense* does not hold good in the case of the Advaitin for the main reason that Brahman is totally *avāchya* in terms of any words. In the case of objects which are completely indeterminate, there is no possibility of the use of *secondary sense* or its application. In the case of the example 'the village on the Ganges' the word Ganges is *vāchya,* so there is the possibility of the *secondary sense.* By no manipulation can - language describe Brahman.

Madhva criticizes the concept of *nirguṇa* Brahman on several grounds. Philosophical inquiry or *jijñyāsā* itself presupposes that ultimate reality has attributes. No inquiry is possible in respect of an attributeless entity. The very purpose of an inquiry is to have definite knowledge about the nature of the subject of the inquiry. If the subject is indeterminate, no inquiry is possible on the Advaita hypothesis, there can be no philosophical inquiry at all. For inquiry to be possible Brahman must be *saviśeṣa. Nirguṇatva* is itself an attribute, for it marks off from other attributes.

Further, the Advaitin holds that 'final release' can be obtained by the knowledge generated from *mahāvākhyas* e.g., 'That Thou Art', 'I am Brahman', and 'The Self is Brahman'. This is the *vivaraṇa* view, that immediate experience comes through the great sayings. In support of this view the school gives the example of the ten travellers who counted only nine after crossing a ferry, and

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vyākula buddhyo guru-sampradāya-vikala aśruta-veda vyākhyātāraḥ sarvatrāpi-ekarupatām-ananusandadhānā chidanti.
(Nyāya sudha, p. 124).

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find the experience of the immediate presence of the tenth person when a trustworthy person points to the traveller who forgot to include himself in the counting and says, 'You are the tenth'. In like manner the great sayings reveal the immediacy of Brahman.

Vācaspati's school holds that the great sayings only give us *mediate knowledge* and cannot give us immediate experience. It is *continued meditation* and not *śravaṇa,* i.e., listening to the great sayings that is the cause of Brahman realization.

The other schools of Vedanta do not accept this position. The very nature of the *attributeless* Brahman rules out the possibility of language denoting Him. Final release can never be the result of verbal testimony. It is the result of the grace of the Lord arising from the individual's *bhakti* and not through verbal testimony.

PARAMĀRTHASĀRA — (*Continued from page* 418)

'Just as the lifeless slough of a snake is cast off and lies on the anthill, so does this body lie.' * This text clearly brings out that the body of a man of realization can remain, though it is not moved by passion and attachments like that of a man immersed in *avidyā.* तस्य तावदेव चिरं यावन्न विमोक्ष्ये अथ संपत्स्ये ॥ 'For him there is delay only so long as he is not liberated (from the body); then he attains perfection.' † (*Chandogya* 6.14.2.).

NOTE: The nature of a person who has attained Kaivalya, giving up (identity with) Prakṛti represented by body etc., is being stated next.

भिद्येऽज्ञानग्रन्थौ छिद्यन्ते संशयगणे शुभाशुभे क्षीणे। दग्धे च जन्मबीजे परमात्मानं हरिं याति ॥ ७२ ॥

72. When the knots of ignorance[1] are cut off,[2] when the mass of doubts are destroyed,[3] when merit and demerit are expended and when the seed of births is burnt, one attains Hari, the Supreme Self.

[1] *The knots of ignorance* are the identifications with body etc., that are begotten due to ignorance.

[2] *Cut off* by the knowledge of Prakṛti and Puruṣa.

[3] *The mass of doubts*: Whether there exists or not a Self, separate from the body? If it exists, is it the Lord or not? Is it one or not one? If it is the Lord where does He reside? Is He in every body or present only on top of the mount Kailasa, or in the Milk-ocean, or in the east or in the west, or in the south or in the north or above or below?

The reference of this verse is to *Muṇḍakopaniṣad* passage 2.2.8.

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* *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad,* Translation by Swami Madhavananda, Pub: Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta.

† Swami Nikhilananda's translation of the Upanishads (Fourth series), Phoenix House, London.

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NOTES AND COMMENTS

Swami Nityabodhananda a former Editor of the *Vedanta Kesari* is at present the Head of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre at Geneva, Switzerland.

The article 'Meaning of Svataḥgrāhyatva in Regard to Prāmāṇya and Aprāmāṇya" by Dr. Anima Sen Gupta, M.A., Ph.D., Reader in Philosophy, Patna University, Patna, is a part of the author's new book, 'Classical Samkhya" which is to be shortly published.

Dr. K. B. Ramakrishna Rao is the Principal and Professor of Philosophy, Sri J.C.B.M. College, Sringeri.

Dr. Ruth Reyna, M.A., Ph.D., is Lecturer in Indian Philosophy, Panjab University, Chandigarh, Panjab. Her article "The Doctrine of the Self in the Indian Philosophy" is the text of a lecture delivered by her at the Panjabi University, Patiala, on November 8, 1966.

"The Report" on the "Colloquium" is by Swami Budhananda, an ex Editor of *Vedanta Kesari*, who was one of the participants in it.

Sri M. V. Sridatta Sarma, M.A., is an official in the palace of the Maharaja of Mysore. He is also an Indologist and has contributed to the *Vedanta Kesari* on earlier occasions as well.

Br. Sudhanshu is of the Ramakrishna Order.

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REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE RAMAYANA, pp. 178; THE MAHABHARATA, pp. 188: By Ramesh C. Dutta. Publishers: Jaico Publishing House, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bombay. Price each: Rs. 3.00.

If one were asked what national book has most determined the character of the Indian peoples, the answer would point not to the Veda or the Upanishad or the Gita but to the two Epics, Ramayana and Mahabharata. For there is not a single homstead in which the legend of Rama and the legend of Krishna are not known, and the heroes of these epics not held as the ideals for one's own growth. As Sri R. C. Dutta observes, "Mothers in India know no better theme for imparting wisdom and instruction to their daughters, and elderly men know no richer storehouse for narrating tales to children than these stories preserved in the Epics. No work in Europe, not Homer in Greece or Virgil in Italy, not Shakespeare or Milton in English-speaking lands, is the *national* property of the nations to the same extent as the Epics of India are of all the Hindus. No single work except the Bible has such influence in affording moral instruction in Christian lands as the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* in India. They have been the cherished heritage of the Hindus for three thousand years; they are to the present day interwoven with the thoughts and beliefs and moral ideas of a nation numbering two hundred millions."

And one of the signal services of this scholar-civilian in projecting the image of the Indian mind on the world stage was to have translated into English, in condensed form, both these Epics. This he did in two thousand couplets each, holding to the main narrative with notes to link up the whole. The translator explains how he has preserved the rhythm of the Sanskrit slokas in a metre that comes nearest to the original. These translations have been out of reach to the common reader for many years now and we welcome the present popular edition of these classics.

M. P. PANDIT.

THE ATOM AND ITS NUCLEUS: By George Gamow. Publishers: Jaico Publishing House, Bombay-1. Pp. 153. Price: Rs. 3.00.

It was once believed that atom was the smallest, indivisible particle of matter. Later it was conceded that it contained two elementary particles, proton and electron. Still later, a third was added, neutron. And then a fourth, a fifth, a sixth — there is no stopping. In order to accommodate the quantum theory, the relativity theory and

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other recent theories of Nuclear Physics, scientists have gone on adding more and more elementary and sub-elementary particles to the structure of atom so that, as things stand at present, the interior of an atom is as crowded as, and perhaps more complex than, our external world — a veritable macrocosm in a microcosm.

In this book, Prof. Gamow gives an outline of the interior structure of atom and brings within the scope of his discussion the more recent developments and discoveries in the nuclear field, including the splitting of atomic nuclei. Primarily written for the lay reader and containing a large number of helpful diagrams and charts, the book is informative without being technical.

M. P. PANDIT.

THE PETITION TO RAM: A translation of Vinaya-Patrika, with introduction, notes and Glossary by F. R. Allchin. Pp. 335. Price: 48s. nett. George Allen & Unwin Ltd. Ruskin House, Museum Street, London.

This is the second of the major compilations of Tulsi Das, which has been furnished to the English-speaking world, thanks to the initiative of the UNESCO Cultural organization and the Sahitya Academy. Tulsi Das's Vinaya-patrika is certainly one of his masterpieces, and though it was designed only as a garland of verses for individual or group singing, many of them contain metaphysical and philosophical thoughts of the highest import. (P. 148. Lines 1 to 3.) Tulsi Dasa's consuming or overmastering passion was his devotion to Rama, whom he identifies with the Absolute and with the other incarnations of Vishnu as well. Verse 52 (P. 116) is a resume of the Ten Avatars, all of which, the poet believes, were but emanations of Rama; even "Gajendra Moksha" he would attribute to the powerful impact of Ramnam (P. 114. Line 6.) Rama, he avers also confers Advaitic knowledge (P. 133, Line 1), (P. 124 and 125). The poet's devotion to God Siva is immeasurable. Sankara is "a great God, a great giver, a great simpleton", a "capricious giver", he "melts with a little service": for he cannot bear "to see the hands joined in supplication" — he confers "pleasures, intellect and salvation" (P. 85).

The author rightly regards Tulsi among the "great mystics of the world": who had exemplified "a profound and integrated world-view". A valuable part of the book is the historical and religious background, which the author has provided and which attributes "the strongly advaitist flavour" of his writings to the trend represented by Adhyatma Ramayana (30). The author has also set out the life of the poet. His view is that Tulsi Das had drawn inspiration from the Abhangas of Tukaram which emphasize the Nirguna form of worship, as well as from Sur Das (46). The philosophical orientation of these songs, he concludes, is towards Advaita, rather than Dvaita or Visista Advaita (69). The author has also dealt with the metres of "Vinaya Patrika" in a scientific way. The book is the richer for the addition of copious notes on the text, and a glossary, which reveals a high degree of research and scholarship and an intimate knowledge of the sacred literature of the East.

The author has admirably succeeded in carrying over the magic of Tulsi's language, to "add lustre to our tongue". Both he and the publishers who have spared no pains to bring out this forgotten classic in such a splendid format, deserve the thanks of many at home and abroad.

S. RAJAGOPALAN.

THE GREAT INTEGRATORS: THE SAINT SINGERS OF INDIA: By Dr. V. Raghavan. Publications Division, Government of India, Delhi. Pp. 184. Price: Rs. 2.25.

The substance of this valuable book consists of the Patel Memorial Lectures delivered by the author in 1964. He makes a rapid survey of the Bhakti movement that followed the Post-classical Age all over India and the directions in which it took shape in the various parts of the country. He traces certain common and fundamental features in the contributions of the saint-singers of different faiths in different parts and underlines the unifying role they played in the religious, cultural, political and literary spheres.

He takes into account the heritages left by the Nayanmars and Alwars of the South, the Haridasas of Karnatak, Saints of Maharashtra, Sufis of the North, Vaishnava singers of the North-East etc., and points out how they all tended to emphasize the unity of the land, commonalty of men and oneness of God. They gave a tremendous fillip to the growth of regional languages and brought the spiritual riches of ancient Scriptures like the Veda and Upanishads to the common man. What was implicit in the mystic utterances of the earlier Rishis was brought out in full expression in the outpourings of these minstrels of God.

The second part of the book (now added to the lectures) contains anthologies from these Saint-Singers, well-known and less-known. There are striking passages like the following one from Lalladevi of Kashmir: "Having known everything, rest thou like one stupid; having heard everything one should be deaf; having seen everything become blind soon; this, the wise say, is the cultivation of the Truth".

M. P. PANDIT.

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A PANORAMA OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY: By Ram Chandra Pandeya. Publishers: Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi. Pp. 223. Price: Rs. 10.

The bulk of this book consists of lectures delivered by the author in 1965 at the University of Saigon. He has tried to familiarize the South Eastern audience with the tradition of Indian philosophy and the developments based upon certain fundamental truths which constitute the core of that tradition. He follows the lead of Western scholars in his interpretation of the Veda and the Upanishads. Understandably he deals with Buddhism in more detail. A number of chapters are devoted to the problems of philosophy like the Problem of Knowledge, Value of Nature and Freedom, Means of Knowledge etc. The writer succeeds in giving a non-technical treatment to these academic questions.

Speaking of the central theme of the Indian philosophy, he observes it is "the investigation of ways and means that could lead a person from nescience to science, from lesser values to the supreme value, from darkness of barren reason and logic to the light of wisdom and realisation of truth, from mortality to immortality". He takes care to refute the alleged enervation of the Indian mind by the spirit of its philosophy.

There are two appendices containing his papers on Karma and Rebirth, and extra-sensory perception and Yoga. These are brief and necessarily touch only a fringe of the complicated questions.

M. P. PANDIT.

THE YOGA SYSTEM OF PATANJALI: By James Haughton Woods. Publishers: Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi-7. Pp. 381. Price: Rs. 7.50.

This capital production, now made available at a cheap price thanks to the munificence of the Indo-American Standard Works Programme, was first published fifty years ago. It represents a painstaking contribution by American scholarship to Indic studies and has a historical significance of its own. Mr. Woods gives in this work a literal translation of the Sutras of Patanjali, the Bhashya of Veda-Vyasa and the gloss of Vachaspati Mishra.

In his introduction the author discusses the possible identity between the Patanjali of the Yoga sutras and Patanjali of the Mahabhashya. He rightly concludes that they are not the same and gives cogent reasons for it.

One notable feature of this translation is that the author is aware that the English language cannot render the full significance of many key terms in Sanskrit e.g., Purusha, Atman etc. Actually such terms have different connotations in different contexts and have to be translated differently.

As a translation this work is faithful and can be useful for scholars. But for the average readers who do not know Sanskrit well enough and yet want to understand the Sutras, it makes difficult reading. All the same the venture is commendable.

M. P. PANDIT.

HANDBOOK OF HUMOUR FOR ALL OCCASIONS: By Jacob M. Braude. Publishers: Jaico Publishing House. Bombay. Pp. 400. Price: Rs. 5.00.

Someone said that the one element which distinguishes man from the rest of the animal creation is his capacity to laugh. We do not know. We cannot be sure that the animals do not have their own way of laughing at the folly of man. For there is plenty about man and his doings that invites laughter. And it is in one's capacity to see the laughable things about oneself that marks his readiness to exceed himself. Braude's handbook contains more than a thousand jokes, witticisms and humourous situations — all tending to lighten the burden of life. The book also contains a large number of provocative definitions e.g. *Flattery*: A commodity that makes everybody sick except those who swallow it. *Gratitude*: A secret hope of greater favours.

M. P. PANDIT.

BENGALI

VEDANTA-SAMJNA-MALIKA: Compiled by Swami Dhireshananda. Publishers: Udbodhan Karyalaya, Calcutta.

This Garland of Vedantic definitions is a treatise on terminology. About two hundred basic terms that appear in the dialectics of Advaita are studied in convenient groups of two, three, four etc. Subtle distinctions between apparently allied concepts are brought out into relief. The work is a compilation from various sources, especially from *Aryasamjnavali* of Swami Svarupananda and *Vedantasamjna-prakaranam* of Swami Adityapuri. The definitions are first given in Sanskrit verses and then follow the Bengali translations, additional references and notes. A useful book which could be brought out in simple Sanskrit with or without English renderings.

M. P. PANDIT.

SANSKRIT

VIVEKANANDA SAMSKRITA - VIDVAD-GOSHTHEE - SMARAKANJALIH: Compiled by Swami Apurvananda, President, Sri Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama, Varanasi. Price: Rs. 2.

Sri Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama, Varanasi, under the able guidance of Swami Apurvananda,

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has been working for the propagation of the Sanskrit language as a religious duty, as Swami Vivekananda always valued the knowledge of Sanskrit. The Ashrama took the occasion of the 104th Birth Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda to organize a seminar in Sanskrit by inviting eminent scholars in Sanskrit to participate. The subject chosen for the seminar was: "Vivekananda as the Guide of the Age and Establisher of Vedanta Dharma." An essay competition and an oratorical contest were also arranged for the participating Sanskrit students.

The book under review is a memorial tribute containing the proceedings of the seminar, which were completely in Sanskrit, the speeches made on the occasion by eminent scholars like the Maharaja of Kasi and Justice N. H. Bhagawati, and essays and speeches of the prize-winning students.

Swami Vivekananda always held that the Vedanta Dharma is not the monopoly of Indians; it is a universal Dharma and should be pursued for universal good. Vedanta is the only solution for all the ills of the world. Just as all footprints disappear when an elephant walks, so all religious truths and perceptions established by the great teachers of the world get merged in the vast sweep of Vedantic thought. And this thought is embedded in the Sanskrit language, the language of Divine Revelation. If Vedanta is universal, Sanskrit also is universal and the spiritual progress of the world will be quickened with a knowledge of the language of the Spirit, i.e. Sanskrit.

These lofty ideas we find, permeate throughout the work.

S. SHANKARANARAYANAN.

NEWS AND REPORTS

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH, MADRAS

CHRISTMAS EVE

The Christmas Eve was observed as in other years at Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, on the 24th December 1966, in the Math Hall at 7 p.m. after Arati in the Shrine.

Swami Kailasananda welcomed the speaker of the evening Rev. Father Ignatius of the Loyola College, as also the gathering.

Swami Mitrananda read some selected passages from the Gospels of the Bible concerning the Nativity of Christ, the Sermon on the Mount and the Lord's prayer.

Rev. Father Ignatius then spoke for more than an hour describing what the Nativity of Christ meant, and how the Christians celebrated the Christmas Eve.

After a vote of thanks by Sri C. S. Ramakrishnan of Minerva Tutorial College, Madras, the celebrations came to a close.

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HOLY MOTHER'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

The Tithipuja in connection with the Holy Mother's Birthday which fell on 3-1-1967 was observed at Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras with Mangalarati in the Shrine a 5 a.m., followed by singing of devotional songs, Vedic chanting, Chandi Path, special worship in the Shrine and Homa which went on upto 1 a.m. About 1,000 devotees were given prasad in hand.

In the evening after Arati in the Shrine there was reading from the life of the Holy Mother, followed by talks by Swami Paramatmananda and Swami Kailasananda.

The public celebration which was held at the Vivekananda Hall, in the Math premises, on 8-1-1967 began with Harikatha on the life of the Holy Mother by the girl-students of the Sri Ramakrishna Math Vivekananda Centenary Girls' High School, Madras-1 at 2-00 p.m. followed by Harikatha on "Dhruva Charitra" by Sri Embar Vijayaraghavachariar, at 3-30 p.m.

The public meeting which began at 5-30 p.m. was presided over by Swami Ranganathananda, Secretary, Sri Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta. Swami Kailasananda welcomed the speaker, President and the audience. Sri A. N. Parasuraman, Principal, Minerva Tutorial College, Madras, spoke in Tamil on the life and teachings of the Holy Mother for nearly forty minutes.

The prizes for winners in the elocution competition conducted by Sri Ramakrishna Mission Sarada Vidyalaya Girls' High School for High School Girl students, in this connection were distributed by the President at this stage.

Swami Ranganathananda then addressed the gathering, in English, on the significance of the advent of the Holy Mother for about an hour.

With a vote of thanks by Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, Director, The Advanced Centre of Philosophy, University of Madras, the meeting came to a close at 7-55 p.m.

After this there was *bhajan* led by Swami Priyananda at the Math Hall from 8-15 p.m. to 9 p.m.

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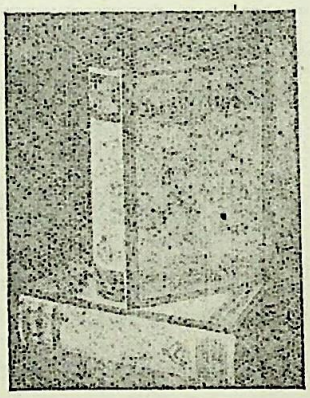

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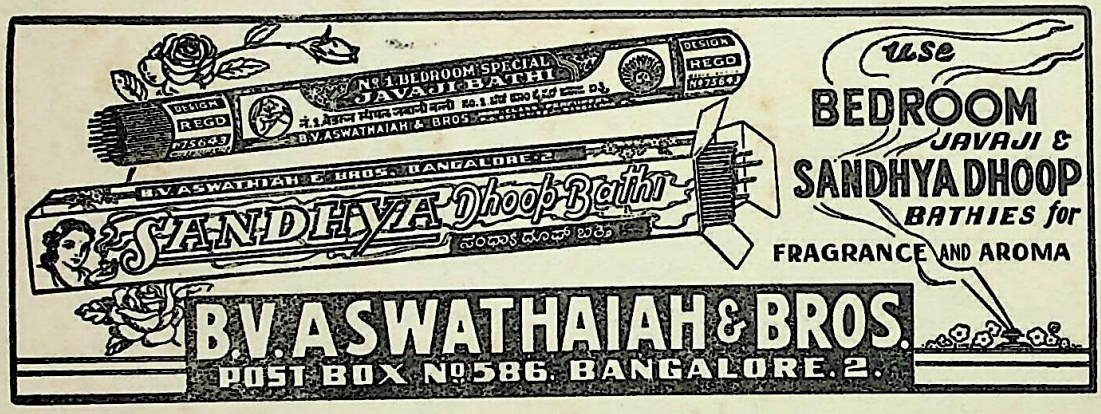

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